Book launch and introduction to ACEs

Hey, you guys, it's me, Dr. Tori. My book is officially out. And yes, It is time to talk about ACEs. You guys can find the books everywhere. However, I would encourage you, guys to go to my website, bevictorious.com and place your order today.

Yes, its time talk to about ACES. Let's go, y'all. Hello, hello, Hello you guy. Welcome to another episode of Be Victorious Now, if you want to know how I started the journey of becoming victorious, this individual has been there since day one.

It was me and him, and I will share. that started out, I was his ACT prep coach. That's it. And we started having conversations. I don't think we knew at the time that the discussions we were having were about ACEs, but we starting talking and we have bonded and connected.

i am honored to be his mentor. I just remember him saying, hey, i want to go to the University of Illinois. and i was like, okay, let's make it happen.

At that time I was a teacher and when I got the position of director of student activities, I made it happen. And so we took a bus, we went to U of I, and we started getting African Americans into UofI with no problem.

We needed to get some awareness out there so people can know that people from Chicago can graduate and attend college.

Mentorship origins and college pathway

And this was back in 2012. Here we are in 2025. Not only is he a graduate of University of Illinois, But he's a teacher, interesting, with a certification in special education.

So not only does he know about ACEs, but he deals with it in the front lines and has been doing it for years. One of my favorites, I never hide it. Marcel, where are you?

Good morning, good morning. Y'all know, let's be clear. If you see me, you'll see him. Let's see clear, this is Marcel. Yall, oh my God. To have you on this podcast is a dream for me because I always go to you.

I'll always talk to about things. It's been like that with us since day one. So just to have what we have now. How do you feel about all of this, seriously?

Woo. It's an honor. Like, I never would have thought that I would be sitting here today, especially if you asked 2011, 2012 version of me, he would've been like, huh, what?

Like that's not happening. So it feels good. I'm happy to be here. Because you got to think about it at 2011, 2012 is when you experience, you have adverse childhood experiences and things that have happened.

And it's like, we did not know at that time. I think that's the reason why I pour so much because at the time I didn't have a me. So when I met you, I wanted to make sure that you had a Me.

What I needed. And I think that's the reason why you all have to understand. Shout out to the Victoria's Foundation. I couldn't leave education without taking my mentorship with me.

Absolutely. And so when you get people that say, hey, I still need a recommendation or hey can you help me with this or, Hey, can we do this? This is the reasons why your a teacher right now.

How does that feel? How long have you been teaching? Tell us about you, Marcy. Woo. So I started my education journey in 2016, right out of college. I was working as a reading interventionist in the South Suburbs in Chicago Heights.

That was, it was interesting. Um, I enjoyed it. I could do more though. But one thing that I loved is the impact that had on some of the students. There was one student in particular, and I still think about him today, like I wonder what he's doing, how he is today.

And he has to be, ooh, he was out of college now, wow. I know, that's crazy. Uh, but it just kind of sparked my interest. Then I said, you know what? I want to stick with this.

I then after that, I took my talents to the west side, Chicago, uh, legacy charter school. Shout out to legacy. And that's where I've been ever since I was doing reading intervention for third and fourth grade.

Uh, then in 2020 pandemic hit an opportunity came, my principal, she called me one day. I can tell you exactly where it was. Yeah. She said, Hey, you know, the fourth-grade teacher she's going on maternity leave.

You would be great for the position. Me? You sure? Me?" Then imposter syndrome just, it was hitting hard. But I accepted. I took on a challenge, taught virtually on Zoom.

That was interesting. And I'm sure everybody who taught, virtually can say the same. Then moved to hybrid model. then I've been teaching fourth grade ever since, which I loved.

Just the challenge. dealing with the parents. Just every day was interesting. I built some connections. It was actually just the other day with a mentee that I used to work with, just taking him out and talking about finishing off high school and college and all that good stuff.

But then the end of 2023, another opportunity came. Principal, she came again and said, hey, it was a bunch of us, We have the Golden Apple Foundation.

They have this program where you can get your license for free. Not only that, but they'll pay you. And at first I was like, I don't know, should I do it?

Why not? I went for it, signed up for special education.

Teaching journey and special education

As I started taking the classes, as I've started to kind of really learn more about special eduction, and I'm like yeah, this is it. This is what I want to do.

I think over the years being a junior teacher, I've always kind of paid attention in those IEP meetings. And I listened to special education teachers and I just kind took note.

I don't think at the time I realized I was doing it, it was kind unintentional. It was just kinda learning and just catching on. But it stuck and i've been in the program.

Just got my license in May officially. Shout out to that. And this next year I will be the seventh and eighth grade special education teacher. I'm so happy for you.

So happy. Oh, happy, for, you, I take, always taken mentorship seriously. and that's the reason why B Victoria's foundation exists. But if you notice, as he was discussing, he talked and shared his story.

The full circle moment for me always is that he's a mentor too. He's in the front lines. He is in community. On the west side. So if anybody knows about Chicago, he's on the West side of Chicago where ACES, community violence, bullying, everything else.

See, when I did my dissertation, those were recommendations. It was like, we need this. ACEs is this, because now that you're into special education, as you see, some of those letters, In special education, that's how I became interested in ACES because it is really cross-categorical.

It covers everything. I don't think you all even knew at the time that I was a special-education teacher because, again, there's a stereotype on special educational education.

And for me, I think that that is the reason why I got into it because I know I'm GT. gifted and talented. You have to think about it. You have gifted, and you have special education, and then you had the severe profile.

Anybody that cannot function in a regular education classroom is special educational, but because we look at it in such a negative way, there's a stereotype on that.

I have children that are GT. I knew when Kermari was in the sixth grade, and there were some issues, I was like, it's gonna be a problem. I gotta figure out something because she was real fast.

You ain't done? Cory's the same way. Oh, and I couldn't, you know what I mean? So when you think about it, my family, that I'm not even talking about how Kennedy can graduate next year, let's be clear, not talking even about that, but you my children and you honestly, when think it the stereotype is, You said, I'm saying.

Be into understanding aces because you had people that we went to school with that were in that emotionally disturbed category, or they were In that behavior disability.

Those are Categories under special education and I don't want people to define special Education based off of a label, which is the reason I poor as far as adverse childhood experiences because not only do I think you need to be a labor under Special Education.

Let's be clear. I'm working on it. Do you know how I am? I mean, but I want to see why it's not on there already because If you think about just ACE as a category, that would eliminate the behavior disorder stereotype or the emotional, emotionally, I think they call it emotionally disability.

or it could be emotionally disturbed, for sure, depending on how you define that D. But when I tell you, I think that needs to be defined, you know what I mean?

So that's where I started pouring. You graduated 2012. I remember going for my doctorate degree in 2014. But that's kind of how I got into understanding ACEs and doing that.

So understand you guys, this is the reason why Marcel is sitting here, not just as somebody that I really know, but somebody who has been through this journey with me.

You know what I mean? This is what we're doing. We're having this conversation, But we are really out here doing the work. Now, you were a panelist. Wait, wait, before I bring up the panelists.

You are an ACES ambassador. Thank you. Been doing the work. And I appreciate it. Like, I will shout out University of Illinois, the alumni network. is connected to be Victoria's Foundation.

They saw you, they've been sending your information out there. Why wouldn't they? You are a psycho breaker. You're someone that they should be putting out their, a black man in education doing what you're supposed to do.

Your self credit. you gotta give yourself credit because it's hard out here. It is. So what did that experience been at the conference mean to you? I loved it.

It was interesting just being around people in education, but not just education in the mental health field. There were so many little gems that I picked up on.

So many moments when I'm like, wow, this person really just said something. Even time I put in my notes, one that will not forget is The woman, it was one panel and she said, my trophies have legs.

I said wow. Like I don't need, you know, any awards and accolades, My trophys have licks. And that like, that really stuck for me. That's us. For sure.

It definitely was impactful. Every little thing, every little tidbit that was given, I was trying to take notes. I'm trying write it down because I wanted to remember it.

Being up there, just speaking. was also amazing. It was good to, you know, be by some fellow educators, also people that I went to school with. So it was to see them as former classmates, but also as educators now.

Just giving their experiences and just hearing like, we're all kind of in the same boat, was great. I was confident to know like okay, were all in this together.

You know it's not just me out here putting in work, there's a whole room, a group of people who are fighting and putting into work. I love that experience, and I'm all for, you know, panels and discussing my experience and discuss education.

I loved it. And I will tell you, I threw your name out there a couple of times.

Conference reflections and ACEs awareness

So I had to because I don't want it to be a shift from our generation. Like, let's be clear, if you are not aware, Marcel is the I've mentored him already.

like I have done my job. If he needs something, then I am going to there again. I loved how Reggie defined mentorship in his presentation because, yes, I'm your mentor, but you all have to understand we grew up together so it's a little different.

I am not just mentoring him, brother, cousin, this is what we do. Marcel mentions my names in rooms and it's humbling to me because I've met a lot of people.

And this full circle moment is going to always be something for me. I hate to say it, but I think back in 2011, 10, I thing it was ACES because we were comfortable with each other to share.

When we we're in a room, it just us. It wasn't anybody else in the room. People would come in for our ACT prep. But we started and it was me and you when we first started.

It was like, you stand after school? Yeah. Oh, well, let's do this ATT prep and look at us now. Never would have thought. I don't think so either. So speaking of aces, do you have an ACES score?

Okay. What's your ACEs score. So I took it actually this morning to try to take it every so often. This morning was a one. Okay. Now let's be clear. There is an ACES 101 class that I'm doing.

It's gotten kind of popular. So we're going to do it as a group this time because people from the conference have scheduled it one-on-one. And they're out here finally in the community having the ACES talk.

And I'll share with you this. One of the people that I jumped in on, one of young ladies was like, hey, Dr. Torrey, I took your quiz. It was great. I loved it.

But I like how you're defining it now. Now I'm like going through the 101 because there's three questions in one. So it's hard to answer the question because you want to say no to the one of the answers is no, so you're not defining it.

And she was like, now my score went up from a five to a six, and I was, like girl, I tell people, it depends on the day. It depends who I'm talking to.

So it, depends, on, the experience that I am sharing. I get your one, but I can tell you now, that other adversity, household dysfunction, community violence, And that was one of the questions I sat and talked about.

And I'm like, hmm, this might really be a three. Yes. But I really sat with some of those questions. It's like I don't really know how to answer this.

From the ACES conference, I've been, hey, Dr. Torrey, how you broke that down? Can you please do like an ACEs 101 training, like a class, that type of thing.

So that is what I am doing. There's actually going to be lot more classes thanks to the conference. for clarity, for understanding. But I love that because, again, we're not letting the ACES score define us.

We're bringing awareness. So when she brought that up, that made me feel so great because she was like, Dr. Torrey, I took your quiz. That's how I know about ACEs.

Defining it, breaking it down, she said, how you broke it now. To break it even more, More people need to be talking about him like hey, I know conference that's the reason why we have in classes, because it works, it helps, and it hopes people with their healing journey.

And so that, that is what I love. that you empower people. I love how, again, I've met your mentees, thanks to you being a wonderful mentor. So I have a question.

And what do you do empower others, whether it's your family, It's your workplace or community to break generational cycles. One minute, hold on. I thought that was the cutest thing.

Please tell my son, I said, hello. Hello. So I told you guys, Marcel is a wonderful, wonderful mentor. You all didn't see it, but I did. And Marshawn, you all know Marshan.

That's actually Marcel's brother. Marshal and Marcel are brothers. Because they know marshaun. They know you. But I don't think that they Not many, no.

And I tell you, Marcel is a mentor. You've got to understand I would not have met Marshawn if it wasn't for Marcel. So again, back to the question. In what ways do we empower others?

Good question and appropriate time to answer. I think the number one way for me is just living my life. Like I said, I was with one of my mentees the other day.

And it's so funny because he knows me now. I've been knowing him since fourth grade, and I'm been kind of mentoring him. Since then, he's now a junior in high school.

It's funny, because I had a list of questions like, hey, what are you doing? When is this happening? Blah, blah, he got in the car and immediately started answering before I can even ask.

And that's because he knows me. He knows what I expect. You know, that I support him. Just how I operate. So one, I just try to live my life according to how, like you said earlier, you didn't have a you.

I don't want to be the me for other people. Very good. my story, talk about education, how I wanted or I thought I want it to do one thing, but I ended up here.

I just tried to be an example for other people and didn't just be non-judgmental and just being a listener. Like I try to slow to speak sometimes and be quicker to listen.

And by just living my life and just people seeing the authenticity, authenticity. I hate that. That empowers people. It empires my mentees because they know that like, oh, this is legit.

Like, you know, when they talk to Mr. Wade, like they might like huh, okay, Mr Wade. But like the know. They know it's genuine. The know what I expect.

And they they can do it. Whatever that goal is, whatever that challenge is. So, my biggest thing is just being me and just saying, hey, if I can do X, Y, and Z, or if this person that I know can X Y andZ, you could do it.

Let's make it happen. And just providing the resources, providing people if can't do or I don't know. Oh, I knew this first. I'm not a perfect person for that.

Who can help you to get there? And it's worked, it happened. So just living my life, being an example, that's- Y'all, we started off as substitutes. And I think you guys have to understand us being authentic, us to being rare, as being us is why people are drawn to you.

Yeah. I can't be anybody but me. And you have drawn some wonderful people to you, including myself. So again, I agree. Best advice you can give. You empower others by saying, be you.

But what other strategies, habits, or support systems have helped you on your path? Impostor syndrome is real. I even feel in the tibet of it now, going into this new position, but just constantly reminding myself that I can do it.

Like I've been put in this position. giving these opportunities, so just motivating myself. Prayer, for sure. Have to pray before I make a decision. And just my faith, attending church, because oftentimes I know like if something's going on or if there's like a Sunday where I'm like, I don't wanna go.

I just wanna stay in bed. That's the time when I need to go, that's a time I know like you have to be there. So just holding myself accountable, making sure that I'm again praying and listening to the right music and attending church and just leaning on my support systems.

Mentorship, healing, and breaking cycles

If there's something that have a question about, ask. Like we all have questions. We all need help. Uh, we might be Superman and Superwoman, but we are all human.

So I try to remind myself of that and just stay motivated. And one thing that I've been telling people, disconnect. disconnect, get outside, disconnect from the phone and the internet and all these different things.

Just get out. I take a walk and you don't even realize how powerful and how meaningful that could be. Yep. just connecting with nature that's it but this is the reason why when i did my dissertation i connected aces with extracurricular activity because remember when I got into that position I threw all y'all into extacurricula activity and I will tell you now I know for a fact if I pull that data for 10 years because you got to remember TR, they were trying to close it.

Terrible decision. But it's still here. It's up. They're still doing things. The activity is still going. Shout out to Dana Owsley, my sister, who took over when I left.

She's doing her thing. I mean, Ms. Johnson, a counselor, is doing the activities that I had to see that they still had the step show against violence.

Things that were already put in place before, The CDC has made it official that bullying is aces or racial discrimination is out there or community violence exists.

I had kids staying and going to school on Saturday to give them something to do. It makes a difference. It's needed. You're on the west side of Chicago.

It needed your African-American man. Its needed, you are an educator. So what is something that you wish people understood more about childhood trauma and ACEs that isn't talked about enough?

I think number one, that it's okay. It's, it's okay. If I feel like if you are alive and breathing, there's some type of ACEs there. Like we all experience it.

I felt like for the most part in some way, shape or form. Okay. It is not your fault. And I think oftentimes people have this idea of like, Oh, you're trying to live with me, or oh, I'm not this, they don't want to address these issues, but they're not going away.

It's called unresolved childhood trauma. You have to, address it. So number one, it's okay to get that help. Get that, whatever that helps looks like for you.

For me it was therapy. I don' even know, three, four years, one of the best decisions ever. Very good. My current one, oh my God, I love her. Good. I didn't even realize I was doing this.

Like I told one friend, we told another, and now she's gotten like, no lie, like 10 clients just off of me going to her, get that hoe. Find somebody who you can connect with, find somebody you trust, someone who will listen, who fits what you need.

And they're there, they are there. I think from the conference that's why people are so excited because you had us. normal people. Like, I had somebody say, oh my God, you had me on a panel with a doctor.

It's like, y'all look at that like that for real? I just don't see that. I see experience. See us as having ACEs. see us not defining that score. building, us healing and being in a collaborative community.

And so grateful for the ACE community that we have because it's filled with doctors, therapists, cycle breakers, coaches, counselors. I mean, people were so excited just to meet like my people.

It was like, dang, or like people didn't know about sororities. And it was, like wow, so sororties is a real thing. It was like, yeah. Or, dang, so Tori, you talk about your mentees.

Oh, very. Like, I've been doing this for a long time, guys. I know I look young. However, have been this doing for very, long. So to have a full circle moment with you is an amazing thing for me.

Because you are a legacy. When you think about Dr. Torie, let's be clear, y'all. Always talk 2012. And Marcel is in every picture. So if you go back on my history, if don't know Marcel, you do.

Don't act like you don. You see Marcel. I'm in there. So let's talk about legacy. What legacy are you hoping to leave as a Psycho Breaker? Because you're a psycho breaker.

Before you answer that question, let's talk about legacy at Thornridge, Let's Talk About Legacy at U of I, and then we'll conclude with the legacy that you've left as a teacher in your classroom.

So I'm gonna give you some work today. I don't know about you, I am sorry. One thing that And I think they're all connected. Because there's one thing that I often think about.

I didn't think of it at Thornridge. But as a teacher, I thought about it. was always praised. The teachers always said, oh, you know, I wish I had a classroom full of them and never really got in trouble, got the best grades, which is great.

Shout out to me. But I think that can also be harmful to some kids. And I've come across kids as a teacher who, what's that? but they were afraid to make mistakes.

But when they made a mistake, it was the end of the world. And I tried to tell those kids, I see you. Yes, school may

be easy for you, or you may work very hard, get the grades.

You may not get in trouble often, but you're human. If you make a mistakes, that's okay. pour that and push that for those kids. Cause I've come across so many because I was that, I started to see it like, wait, like you remind me of somebody, somebody being me.

And I want those keys to know that it's okay. It's Okay to mess up. it is okay to make a mistake. Is what you do with it. Its your next step after that.

That really makes a difference. and that's what I hope I've left at Thornridge. I hope people have seen me and felt like, okay, I'm seeing a transformation.

Cause I, you know, been this quiet kid, but I think when I graduated and when left, You know I came out of my shell a little before and I am hoping that somebody who was also in their shell saw that and say, I could do it too.

Student council, vice president. I can go for it. So I'm hoping that's a legacy. You, Diana, and Whoopi. Yeah, we did. And I think we all kind of were the same way.

We all were in that shell. But over time we grew. Mm-hmm. it started to become the same way. Like I had so many mentees, shout out to Kevin Spencer. Oh, love me so much, I can't even, so name them all.

I've met half of them, let's be clear. And while we're talking about U of I, I got a shout out, Michelle, shout her out. Of course. From Thorne Ridge.

I love when you invite people. Yeah, you set a tone because when they saw you go to UofI, they was like, so we doing U Of I in 2013. So we went 2013, we want 2014, We went 2015. Michelle was 2015 and then ended up going and yeah, wrote that nice little letter.

And let me just say, everybody who went there. Phenomenal. They're making things happen. And they're doing things today. Shout out to all the Thornridge slash U of I people.

Yeah. I'll get out the Kiana too. Cause Kianna also just did the golden apple program. We have to shout her out. Because let's be clear. Anytime she does her after school, where she shows that she's in a shop and she was braiding hair and things of that nature.

She's a ACES ambassador. She also goes to Apple. The information is on B. Victoria's Foundation.

Legacy, future goals, and closing remarks

And she's the teacher, too. You guys, we are really doing a lot of work in B Victoria Foundation, as you all know. That's why I could not not bring this part of me outside, you know what I mean?

Of course, I'm Dr. Torey, and I am Dr Victoria's, but I could not not because I honestly would not be who I Am. And I say this every time if it wasn't for mentorship, if It wasn' for me being a mentor.

So having you right now, watch. Everybody gonna be like, okay, let me go ahead and get on the podcast now, because you guys have to understand it's okay to have ACES, it is okay have an ACE score, is it okay be a cycle breaker, its okay understand your mental health.

We are the ones that are advocating, we've been the people on front lines and this is what we're doing. Were here to break generational cycles, generational curses.

And so must it has to. And, and like I said, I'm a speaking into existence. I see principal. Let's get it. let's do what we need to do. Because again, the work that you're doing and that that, you have in the classroom already.

You got to think about it when you say yes. during COVID is when we needed to say yes. Because now, look at what's going on now. We're going through another cycle.

Who knows what is going to happen within the next year or two. COVID was when he was 45 and now he's 47 and we're back to what we are doing. Hopefully it won't be another shutdown and things of that nature.

This is the reason why we have to have the talks. We have had the healing and empowerment. That's the reasons why had an ACES international conference and brought all of these wonderful people together.

And so, again, I want to thank you. Any other last things? If you had one thing to say to someone beginning their healing journey, and I understand you said be yourself, but what would you tell them?

this is hard to do and being in that position and sitting where they're sitting, they might be like, what? But get excited. Get excited for what's to come.

get exciting for the person that you want to be. Here's an activity for that person. In your notes, in your notebook, Whatever. Talk to the future you.

If you're 25, write a note to 30 year old you or a 35 year-old you, whatever the case may be. Write a not to yourself a year from now. Ask yourself questions.

Did we accomplish this goal? Did do this? How do you feel about this and then go back to it. Or make a video, I've seen someone do this. I saw a woman who made a videos asking her future self questions.

Did we accomplish this? How did this go? And that was amazing to me. That's amazing. So get excited and talk to your future. Speak things into existence.

Hey, we're going to do. They future me 40 year old me, this is what's going. Or hate myself. How do you like being a princess? You don't want to speak that into existence because I'm telling you.

I have to. Watch. All I'll do is just sit back as I always do and just be happy and support as do because, I said it from the beginning, just I revisit us in that ACT room.

It was days, Marcel, it was just us and we just talked and talked. That person is not the same person that I was. I'm not that same anymore. No, no, when I met you I wasn't expecting at all.

Talking. And then when I found out that I was expecting I had to because you were my confident, my confidant at the time I would say, I will so upset but you got to think about it now.

How my life played a role. I'm going to take your advice. I was 30 when I had camaraderie, and I always tell people now when i'm having those discussions and those talks, my life didn't begin until then, because I have a passion and a purpose I want to make sure that I wasn't me for her to see her graduate.

My inner child is like, oh, because I didn't have that. And so I've been living in it right now. You know what I mean? I'm happy because as a cycle breaker, I was able to achieve what didn get to achieved in high school.

My high-school year, Ryan, panicking, upset. And I did the best that I could so she wouldn't be that way. But I had never seen her out row in my life.

I was happy as heck to see her on the honor roll because like, let's be clear, I didn't get a chance. My parents just graduated, don't have kids. She's going above and she's just getting started.

I know it, and that's the crazy thing. So this is what it looks like, you guys. You have to understand Marcel has been there through some trials and tribulations of my life professionally and personally.

And so to have this conversation with you, I'll be honest, not just only as your mentor, Forever, it did stuff with me forever. But as a echo breaker to see your growth, to how you just defeated the odds because you were the quiet kid, but that quiet kids also has aces and we are not letting that define us.

We're understanding our score, we're out here in our community, were doing service and this is the reason why we have a foundation you guys. So I thank you, Marcel.

It's an honor. Thank you. Hey, so so let people know where they can find you because I'll tell you now they're going to want to know. Yes, he's a mentor, you guys.

And for people that don't know, we need more African-American male mentors because it's yes. It definitely needed Facebook. You can't find me, Marcel Wade on Instagram at symbol M. A. R.

S. A. L. E. underscore. That's not how you spell my name. My name is spelled M-A-R-C-E-L-O. I'm trying to be creative. Again, Instagram, M A R S A L E underscore, and Facebook, Marcel, N A- R- C E L L, Wade, W A D E.

He is one of our ambassadors for sure. So if you guys are looking for a mentor, he mentors through our foundation. If you're looking a speaker or a panelist, this is what he do.

I know professionally and personally. You know why? Because I am his mentor. He is a product of me before being victorious existed. And so it is humbling to see because again you have to understand.

We are change makers, we are cycle breakers. It wasn't what we have done, you've done so much. But I just thank you for, I thank the Lord for us having those wonderful conversations because you have been the motivation, the drive, babysitter, educator, been that for me and I cannot thank So again you guys, our Cycle Breaker episode is real, real life.

We have aces, we're doing what we are doing. So another episode of Be Victorious. You all know who I am. I'm Dr. Tori. Everywhere. But what you will see here in the near future is me and Marcel doing work, not just as educators, but in this community in Chicago, everywhere.

Not just having this conversation about ACES, But having a conversation, about mentorship, About just being educators in a community that needs us. You guys, thank you again for tuning in.

We'll talk to you guys soon. Bye-bye, you, guys.