Book Announcement and ACEs Introduction

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. It's time. To talk. About ACE's. Let's go, y'all. Hello. Hello, you guys. Welcome to another episode of Be Victorious. Let me share something with you.

There are people that have been there from the beginning of this journey with me. And this young lady has. When I tell you all the people in this study, she knows.

She has been one of the favorite teachers, just like me. It's fun. You have to know the students, you have know what they need. And I think that's the reason why she's always going to be a favorite.

I also think she advocates for ACES. When I tell you advocate, advocate for aces. Miss Richardson, where are you? Yeah, y'all know who this is. They know though, you know what I mean?

Like, we talking about Be Victoria's Foundation, We're talking mentorship, after school activity, everything we have done. to help students with adverse childhood experiences.

Ashley Richardsonu2019s Background and Leadership Role

It's my girl, Mrs. Richardson. Hey, Ashley. Hello. Welcome to Be Victoria's podcast. I'm excited. We went from a classroom, a building together, and look at us now.

How are you? I am good. Little tired. I'm a Dean. So kids will be making me Dean them so Tell us and give us an introduction of who you are. I am a wife, a mother, and honestly a school leader at heart.

I think I've always been that even in the classroom I just needed to understand and really just gain the confidence and the capacity. to know what it would be like to be a school leader.

So that's really my passion. Working with teachers, making that impact. It's larger. In the classroom I had it, but I feel like I have a larger impact when I work with teacher who are now working with our babies.

Let's say you're a true leader, you are a truly leader I can see you as a dean though, because you have that understanding ACEs is needed in your position right now.

Yes. So tell us first off, where did your information in regards to ACE's, when did it start? When did begin? What made you use this in you're position?

Cause I know you were using it in in position for sure. I would say as a teacher, it really, I don't know if you remember or recall when we had the professional development, you know, regarding that, and how it just, It was a light bulb for me.

Like our kids have some trauma and we are getting upset because they don' have pencils in the classroom. We are, getting up set because, they might've said something like, call me stupid or said, shut up.

They're going through some things at home that are really just, they're carrying that. It just it bothered me. Like such and such kicked me out of class because I don't have no pills.

I'm like, are you serious? Do you know her grandmother just passed away? Thanks. So yeah, I saw that with the

kids, but then when I became a school leader, realized we have adults that are leading and feeding our children and they have not healed from their ACE.

So now they are looking for justice and with consequences. And this happening now is the Dean. Like, so I am a restorative Dean and making sure that, yes, I have a code of conduct, but the shoe has to fit.

Just because out of school suspension is there doesn't mean I'd have to use it. And I had a restorative coach in the building. So we collaborate and I get the, why is he still here?

Because I've to make sure the shoes fit, let's talk about it, you know? And then I realized like, oh, and you had to bully. Oh, you had some things that were going on and you needed that.

It was gonna feed you to punish this child, but to child. So I'm realizing in my work, what I need to do, now I am advocating for students, I have to advocate for teachers to get their healing or people that work with our children to give their healings so that they can have their cup filled while we're working with their children.

You know, they're using this book right now. They're usin' this bad. And I'm glad. Because that's what they are using the book for. Not for the students.

Now, you know I got workshops, I've got workbooks, all that for students, let's be clear. But the calls that I have been receiving since the awareness conference, because we are out here talking about it.

Thank you so much. for being a part of something so phenomenal and so wonderful. I think it was the fact that the students, former students. The same ones we still talk to.

We are mentors for real and people do not understand that we were given this role. And I it's because of that professional development of us understanding the student.

Because we knew it. But not every teacher did. We needed the label. We knew it. Well, you got to say that again, because you went in and out.

Discovering ACEs in Teaching and School Leadership

I know, that's all. As I said, we needed to label because we had it, and then we got the labels. So the frame together, That's what kind of that turn on the light bulb that helped us run with it and help you definitely run it to just make sure everybody knew what had a face, it had to name.

I had to, you know why? It was, and I talk about that in my book, it was that professional development. And then, I have to shout out my boy, Dr. Michael Thomas, that was like, look, wrong with this, sign up, get your doctorate degree, your going wrong this.

Because we were, people didn't even understand that we were staying after school to help kids get into college, like helping write and get the curriculum ready to get them together to write their own scholarships.

Like people did not really know exactly what we we're doing. But I think having the acronym of understanding it, shout out to Dr. Nadine Burke-Harris, That's when I ran with it.

It was 2014. I remember like, I remembered like when, where, why and how, and I will not stop. But it's people like you that keep me going because you're in it deep too.

So tell us, of course, you know, biases. What about the staff at the school? Do they know about Asis? My building leadership does. So he understands like my mission.

But I also because I've been in this before, I know that I'm going to be a change agent. I am treading lightly of what that's going look like, you know, so it's been a little bit of just having conversations.

So when they're kicking kids out, and I see it something that keeps consistent. Okay, let's let' talk about it. Um, what's goin on with Johnny? You know, and, well, he does this.

Okay. What's your experience with Johnny or when you were in school, because that's kind of where I want to lead to when he was good, what did you see of Johnny, did You see him get kicked out like this?

Is that something that stuck out with you? Oh, no, I didn't have that. Well, my brother kind You know, just making sure it's still organic, but we try to get to the root.

And I'm trying to do that, you know one by one so that they can know that I am relatable, that actually they talk to me. So that one teacher I can talk, I came to her door but then her neighbor came into my office.

I just have some questions about what you're talking with someone so about. That's kind of how I working through it. And then eventually I would love, I saw them, it's like I'd love to do a professional development so they can know their aces and then with their children.

But you know, that's buried down the line. Because I'm not worried about you. For those who don't know, if you go on my website, she's on the first page.

Let's be clear. She is in that chair. But the people that took that book and is doing the work, She's been doing to work. This is one of the that was with me.

So let's clear, this is nothing new to her. she understands. And you are an amazing psycho breaker. You know you What makes you continue this cycle breaking journey.

Can you see me because I noticed that my connection was unstable for a second. Yeah. and whenever you're ready. Did you hear what I said? No. Oh, okay.

What makes you want to continue your cycle breaking journey? I think some of it is that I know that's what I'm called to do. Cause I'll be honest, there's some days I wish I was the secretary or something.

Just didn't acquire a lot of brain power. I feel, especially as I get older, I over-stimulated a little more easier. So I just need to make sure I take some time to myself and my family knows that.

They do give me that space. But I, I see the light bulbs. I seen the impact. And then I make sure I find the joy, you know, of just making just laughing at just different things like I had a student that was just near tears, but I recognize that he really felt bad about what he did.

And I was like, oh, the poor baby. And that just made me smile because he's going to learn from this, even though it's tears. But when he closed the door, I laughed because I know this is something small, but it is huge in his life right now.

It's gonna be something that sticks with them. I knew this because we have our 28 to 30-year-old alumni students that we see that they learned those lessons back then and we see how successful they are now.

Shout out to the Victoria's Foundation because that was the thing that I could not take away when I left education. So I stepped out through the grace of God, year three, blessed.

When I mean blessed, I'm blessed But I kept getting calls, Dr. Torrey, can you help me with this? Are we going to do this, I need this. I just talked to a young lady who is getting her master's degree and she's like, man, i have two people, honestly.

One lady's getting a doctorate degree, she was like we're gonna have to set out some SSS. I can't I came aces and nothing right now. I gotta get some money and I respect that but that's the whole purpose of the Victorians Foundation Because it's people really out here doing this thing.

So I had to have it I Had to happen because this is what we did the stuff that when we was after school Now those was grant that was stuff. That we really had do because I saw school as a safe space Because they did it for me.

Homecoming? Yeah. Heck yeah. Because I would cut it off in a minute and they knew it. They knew IT. I can get a hold of that data. Like if I could get hold it, I know that the rate was down there.

How about at your school? Is that something that you have looked at in regards to, because I'm know, them kids love you. There's nothing you can tell me.

I don't know for a fact. Have you seen a change in the data since you've been Dean? Right now I've actually been focusing on, and it's crazy, I know I'm more on discipline this year, but I always look at their instructional data and their scores, especially in reading and math, are very low.

We also have a very high population of students that speak another language at home.

School Culture, Discipline, and Data

And so I always would tell teachers that high quality instruction goes along with classroom management and making sure all of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, making they feel safe.

Then you just make sure it's high engaging, high impact. You want to make you're hitting all the things. And that would make you a successful teacher.

So I think the teachers are still stuck there, you know, it's multifaceted when we're in the classroom right but they're still on making sure they have students act a certain way but are we looking at how their home life is.

And is that impacting? Because again, they're speaking another language. How much of this language do you know that you can kind of infuse into the classroom?

So that's the data I've been trying to like, I know, that matters. And then I want to get into culture. We've talking with our district leaders about panorama, because they don't have anything that measures culture, are we letting students have feedback?

They're like, well, we have the five essentials, which most educators know we all use, especially in Illinois. But I'm like no, do they know how to advocate for themselves?

Do they what providing agency for ourselves look like? And they're, like okay, okay. Well, that's further down the line, but I think that we need to have that.

So I started mentioning what I know, the tools that I knew that could use to measure data, give the A score, as well as what we need to do to drive the culture.

Yeah. Valuable. I told y'all. See, this is the thing. I think that's the reason why the conversation has been going so well, because people like us see the need in the awareness community and empowerment.

It's a method now. I didn't turn it into a myth. Not to say it like that, like I don't have to turn into method. We had to look at how valuable it's worked.

Since April, look what has happened, what is going on. And I'm tired, not to see it that. It's really a real need to have this conversation. So to see your push, of course, already knew, we knew this, this is what we've been talking about.

This is, what has actually kept us connected professionally, seriously. And then personally, because the kids loved you just as much as I did. We have to that type of legacy when we're in these positions.

So what is something you wish people understood more about childhood trauma or ACEs that isn't talked about enough? I know, so what was recently added to ACEs is racial or racism or experiences.

And I known about a lot of ACE tests or quizzes, they don't have that. We need to also, I feel like my parents tried to do their best in making sure that my brother and I had like a great neighborhood, moved us away from Chicago, wanted to make sure we went to the best schools, but did not realize how much the microaggressions, the prejudice, just all the experiences that they did have because of where they grew up.

It was predominantly black and Latinx. And we grew in predominantly white neighborhoods. even though I'm mild risk, that still has an impact on us. And we see a lot of our more privileged and affluent families that are moving into spaces that aren't predominantly white, we need to make sure that we're checking in with them.

What questions are we asking them when they come home from school and they say, it was fine. No, be more interrogative, ask open-ended questions because that did affect me in ways that I didn't really realize until I became a school leader.

I was like, whoa, I don't know if I know how to interact with people, even though I grew up with them. How do I interact without feeling inferior sometimes?

Because that was what was taught to me. And that's an ace. I know people that don't move back into spaces like this because of, or they choose to go to an HBCU, which is still great, but they are purposely like trying to run from it, not trying heal from.

I think that's something that needs to be, it's not talked about enough, but it needs just be spoken on and like what to do to heal from that trauma. Exactly.

I'm going to bring it up because I actually did lunch and learn today where we talked I was raised in Chicago. I absolutely love Chicago, especially the culture.

Especially the cultural. Understood ACES thanks to Chicago which is the reason why I did everything and started everything in chicago because I knew that this would be an issue.

But I got to be supportive of the mayor. He doing his thing and let's be clear what the president is doing is bullying bad. The numbers for Chicago, I know for a fact, you know I'm a researcher, the numbers are down, been down.

Leave us alone. The number in St. Louis are higher than they are in Chicago. But yet, they're leaving St Louis alone because they didn't do Chicago…

not Chicago St, Louis right during that flood that we just had a couple of months ago. Don't play with me. When it comes to understanding and knowing what's going on.

All of it needs to be brought to the attention of people to understand that we have to have this conversation about ACEs. We have too. Because what this man is doing, look at how much it's bothering families.

The experience within itself. That's ACE's y'all. So for the people that say, Oh, well, what is it? We all have it. Everyone has an ACE score. I loved how you reframed and said that even for the ones that didn't grow up in poverty and grew up a different area, there's some aces to microaggressions.

There are some things there, you guys. Yes, yes, Yes. She ain't saying she bougie. What she's saying is I got an ace in score two. And that's what people have to understand.

The awareness is what we want to get out there so people can understand. So with that, what are some of your healing strategies? Because you have to deal with this every day.

Bless your entire house, not just at school, but at home with loved ones. What are your some healing strategy? I

did seek therapy. I will say I'm not doing, I am not constantly or consistently doing it now and only because after I had that third child it just seemed like another thing to do.

No one told me after three it feels like 40. Uh, what I learned about myself and I just kind of have someone else just to talk and to be a thought partner around what you can know about yourself and build your emotional intelligence.

Um, I realized that I need that space, uh, too. So I make sure like my family, my children, for lack of better words, are trained. Like when I go upstairs and just need a moment, yes, they want to, be all over mommy and tell me what happened for the day.

Racial Trauma, Microaggressions, and Broader ACEs

I'll get to it. And I still make some time. I carve it out. So I'm up at 4.55 every morning to carve out some for myself. When the house is quiet, I work out, then I take a little walk, meditate, and just really just think about my day.

Sometimes on that walk I have a podcast. Sometimes it's a gospel song, you know, just whatever it may take for me to just prepare for the day. I also recognize that I get anxious when I am operating on CP time.

So why don't I just alleviate? some of that with just being on time. So I'm making sure that I am at work at 740 and when I start my day at eight, have my coffee, check my email.

I m finding different ways to make sure I relax. And then with my partner, sometimes I, if I' m upset, I try not to get emotional in the moment. But I'll actually type out in a text message what I want to say so that it will be more clear.

So that I won't feel like I'm bottling it up because I felt like a had to bottle some of that up growing up. But, I wanna make sure I am clear, not emotional.

And I look at the text messages and I like, yeah. You're operating out of your feelings. Let's rephrase it and then I'll come and that's when we'll have our conversation.

And I wouldn't say we don't argue, but it hasn't been a full out argument because of that, because I think he also practices that too. Look at that. I honestly like that like, hold on one second.

Cause my earring came all the way off. and let me share. as I put the earring back on. I like how you just came up with a great, that's a gray strategy because people don't think like that.

We're so reactive, we're reactive instead of being proactive. That's actually a good plan to just sit and just take it out because that way you're not holding it in.

Very good. I think that's added value for someone that is going through their healing journey as someone who has an ACEs score that understands the whole purpose of community and empowerment.

Because these are the things that we have to do in order to help ourselves heal you guys. Self-care is the best care. So I'm going to have take that one because that actually good.

Because I'm telling you, if we continue to be reactive, that's exactly what is going to something different. And I think that another reason why I call ACEs the appetizer to those type of things.

Because that awareness is what you need in order to find out what next steps you will need to take. So that is good that you actually have that now. You have been at this journey for yourself.

personally as well. So with now being a part of the journey professionally and personally, how do you empower others to break their cycle? I think it's naturally for me, I like speaking with children because they're more easier to mold and to have those more vulnerable conversations, especially when they want to advocate for themselves with adults.

Because some adults are already power brokers, already holding all the power. So how can you communicate in a way that they feel that you are on their level?

That's something I started with my children. So that like, even for example, my daughter, she made sure to say to her teacher, this is in fourth grade, because her teachers called me.

And she's like Ms. Richardson, since she told me, I feel like I'm being bullied. I have been intimidated, it has not been warranted, use the word warrant it.

And I've tried to speak up for myself and she continues to do the same thing. That is why I think it's bullied and not just teasing. She's like, I know that it was rehearsed, but I also know, that she recognized the differences because of that.

So she, it, was taken seriously. Cause we throw, man, i'm in a middle school. They throw bully that word all the time. Yeah. It's not bullying, it's tit for tat, its teasing, your child is actually the aggressor, is all those things.

But I'm making sure that I am equipping the students I m interacting with the same way I equip my daughter. This is what bullying looks like, this is how you should give it, these are some examples.

Now how could you advocate for yourself with an adult so that they can feel empowered? I think that's where most of my aces came from as a child, I didn't feel So I'm working with children in that way.

And then when I do have to deal with adults and they said, could you just come in or could call the parent?

Healing Practices and Emotional Regulation

I make sure to use the words. I don't wanna take away your power. So that you, this is your classroom. This is you're domain. this your home. If I call parents for you.

if I deal your discipline all the time for, they're gonna be afraid of me. They're going to respect me And they're going to think you don't have any power.

So I don' want to take that from you. I want help you." So, I make sure to say the word power so they can know like, oh, it's helpful. And it is a productive struggle sometimes, but they know it isn't just me trying to push it back on them.

It's really for me to help in the long run so that they understand this is for you, so I'll make to empower them that way in my profession mostly. That's why I love her, y'all, because I'm telling you just to grow and watch us growing together.

When I tell you she's a phenomenal English teacher. This ding thing is really new and real. So when she introduced herself and told you guys what she was doing, Asis definitely has a lot to do with it.

She's been in this journey for a minute now to step. So to to out of something that I know she loves, cause she's good at teaching English. Y'all, y' all don't understand good.

I'm honored. to say I'm happy for you because I know your numbers are down. I that the staff, I because you know how to work with students with ACEs in a middle school.

You know the Lord is challenging you for real. Oh, Jesus. Because I am telling you she's good. We have the same students. that we have mentored. So we share mentorship responsibilities with a lot of the same students, and they still reach out to her to this day.

This is what cycle breaking looks like, you guys. I've always admired her husband is one of my favorite. When I tell you he will pour, Into these boys he definitely I know he understands aces because i've seen it i'm seeing him work

with these voice coach a mentor do what he needs to do to help.

I think the reward was that I also loved his son. His son was one of my favorites. Just to be in a school where your father works at a schools is a hard thing.

But I, also think that being a person that understood that, I that's how we developed our bond and to see that he is still smiling and athletic and doing his thing.

It's a humbling thing, so I want to tell you as someone that has been a cycle breaker, that is out here doing the work, continue doing what you're doing because your impact is definitely seen.

What are your next steps? Well, someone has I have to listen to that call. I know that it's going to, I recognize that I wanted to do it, but also just financially I want to make sure it felt right as well.

And I'm actually, and I was like, this is God knew, God was guiding. pay for my tuition next and you got a dissertation coach that's going to get you all the way there you already know and see people.

So, again, this is the reason why Dr. Victorious is who I am. I was not given this name. You, I, was given name based off of having the conversations with people, having these discussions, doing what I do, creating victory in people and watching it happen.

It's a humbling thing to see. Trust and believe me, i saw her as an English teacher going all the way up to an english lead Right. To go from that and leaving your passion to go into a dean by calling Dr.

Ashley I claim it because it's gonna happen. It's already been laid out. The school is paying for it already. Yeah. And I took my sweet time. I did, I stayed after school with Sheila.

Shout out to Sheila Flowers who was the housekeeper supervisor. She made sure that the lights was on. That's how I was able to, that's the reason my extracurricular activity was a big deal for me because I really was doing a study on it.

So to see how wonderful the children 10 years later, 2015 just did their 15, their 10 year. I think it's crazy. Like it was crazy, they just didn't. And then, you know, 2016, the thing with 2016 the class that's coming up now, They were the siblings of the previous kids from 2012.

Empowering Students and Breaking Cycles

So I was like, Oh my God. This is humbling to me because to see how well they're doing years later is the humbling thing for me. No, I think that's what it is.

So you have to continue this journey with me, and I know you are, because we've been stuck with each other ever since. Where can people find you? Because, yes, you are on their website.

People do know who you were. They know, they know. Who you want because them kids still was. Yeah, it was bragging about all the wonderful things they're doing now because of the influence that you presented on them.

Where? Can they find? So I have two social media handles that most people find me on. And one is both from my Instagram. One is a underscore rich wife, pun intended.

I also am an author of the Confessions of a Non-Tenure Teacher. So, I'm also giving some You know, just having in my stories and some tips and tricks, especially for those newer teachers or newer folk in education, that they do hit me up in inbox.

And we just kind of go over some scenarios, but I have an Instagram called the non-underscore tenure teacher coach. Another person in the community. Yep.

People laugh, Now, because they have caught on to what the podcast actually is, it's a valuable resource that people have been using to network and connect.

And what's interesting is a lot of the people that are on here are of value, not to say that anyone isn't, but here's another author, you guys. We have a book club, which means she's going to be talking about this book.

We got to get her book up and going because her books can help someone. She just said that. That's the reason why I switched it from Be Victorious with Dr.

Torrey to Be Victoria's Educational Services. So I can support my colleague and say, hey, this is my colleagues. This is what she has done. These books could help you for exactly what you just did.

But not only do you do that, you professional development. You do speaking engagements, and you panels. Let's be clear, we need to continue to do what we're doing because it's working.

Because I said so because you believe me. This is how it has been, this is one of my colleagues. We have grown. The seed was planted, our seeds are growing.

So for those who don't know, yes, there is a life for Those After ACES. There is life For Those Who Have an ACEs Score. You just got to know what to do with it and how you can use it for the awareness, community and empowerment that can help you heal as well.

Absolutely. That's why she loves me. Okay. Big sister, I will always be, and I'm telling you, thank you so much for being here. For anybody else that knows, continue to share this information with others, because when I tell you her expertise in leadership and education is what it is, this is a real person.

This is the person that has been on the front lines, that is in the frontline every day with the students we are advocating for. And to see that you taking a step, I'm ready.

Because there's somebody else that is going back to have that conversation. We got students that she has poured into that it's going to really enjoy and be excited that are going that to school.

So for those who don't know, this is be victorious podcast it is an educational tool that has been used worldwide and you have reached another episode of this wonderful podcast feel free to share because you get to meet wonderful people like mrs richardson we thank you guys so much for another