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. Let's go, y'all. Hello. Hello? Hello, you guys. Welcome to another episode of Be Victorious. You know who I am, the one that creates victory in people.

I love doing what I do and when I tell you this Psycho Breaker series is good. Now this guest, let me tell, you I actually heard him speak at a conference in the way that he poured in a room.

I had to get his attention because I wasn't for sure if he knew about ACES, but his book told me. So not only is he in education, not Is he an author?

I'll say the best for last. He is a former NFL professional football player who is using his story to not only impact youth, but to spread awareness. Doctor, author, principal, life changer and cycle breaker.

Dr. Dyson, where are you? Hey, good evening. You liked that, didn't you? Yeah, I did. I appreciate that. Us educators honestly have to stick together.

When it's having these conversations, yes, it is great to be who we are, but what people really don't understand is those experiences that got us to where we Yeah, absolutely.

Guest Introduction and Shared Educator Background

And it doesn't matter how we use those experiences to advance in life too. I think part of the time we run from them, we hide them and we try to bury them.

As I've gotten older, I started to recognize Obviously, I need to utilize those lessons in them and how can I help the next person, even myself in some regards.

So yeah, man, you know, remember the kid you thought a certain age was old and you realized, that's just knowledge that they're gaining as you get older.

Cause that is exactly what I feel like as I've gotten older, just continue to gain knowledge. Yeah. Now 1998 was a good year for them. 16th. pick in the NFL draft.

So you've been in Tennessee, in The Tennessee area for a long, long time. Yeah, 27 years. I got drafted April of 1998 and man, I retired in 2005 and I just made this home.

Just started working my way through the educational ranks, coaching and doing those types of things. And then I also had some opportunities to do some things out here from a just a personal growth standpoint.

I was doing TV, I had done radio, speaking, you know, locally. Now I'm being able to travel more nationally doing some things. But yeah, man, it just helped me grow as a person outside of football.

You know I have to learn some thing over. One thing I went from high school to college, to pro and each of those transitions, like even stuff like making my own doctor's appointment, I didn't have to do.

And so when you retire at 30 years old and now you're making your own doctors appointment paying your old doctor bills, all the different things you gotta do that you think that are grown and then starting all over your 30s.

It was a transitional, it was good transitional learning curve for me. But now we're here and hopefully I can continue to grow and instill that in my own kids, let alone the kids that I'm around on a daily.

And you are an educator, you're a mentor. You have so many hats that you wear. Now, had you heard about ACES before? Yeah, I have. I think we did something similar in a leadership group in the principals of the school, this system I was at.

And so we went through, we talked about childhood trauma and how it affects how we are as adults and we can lean in, not just for our personal selves, but the people we're surrounded with, who we work with on daily and the kids that we were responsible for.

So I added some experiences with it before. And this is what we want to do, Mr. Principal.

NFL Career, Retirement, and Transition to Education

You are in a position where, not only you in the city, where it looks different in Tennessee than it looked somewhere else. inclusion in the BIPOC area is different and different.

It really varies from state to state. As much as I love Tennessee, you also have schools, HBCUs, the poverty levels, things like that that are really at an all-time high.

But that is the reason why ACE's education is so important and you're in a position to do that. I want to actually shout you out on your books because you have books out there you had tools out their people heal.

So before we go into talking about one of your book, do you know your ACES score. Yeah, I'm kind of right in the middle. I think there's obviously single family home, things of that nature that I guess was my normal thing to think about.

But there were some things on there that kind surprised me that there wasn't. but I'm trying to remember where my numbers were. But I remember it was kind of right in the middle, I believe.

And mine's is a five, and I tell people every time. It really depends on the day, because if you look, And I will share, the original ACEA study had 50 plus questions.

So what some doctors decided to do was narrow those down to 10. People really don't like talking about those, which is the reason why me and Professor Charlie came up with that study.

The study is really to just bring identification to something that we normalize. Like you said, we're okay with being five or sixes, but if you break that ACEs quiz down really and answer those questions, then we up there.

The right now is one in three have an ACE score. Yeah, and I think when I did it here recently, I was basing it off current. I wasn't even thinking about past stuff.

And so my score was lower, but when had done it before, my scores was really high. Again, it's a matter of how they're verbalized and what context you're thinking of the question in, maybe because I thinking out of a different time period, probably the two or three separate times I've done.

That's why I say I'm probably somewhere in the middle. because I have been very high on one end and I think I was low more recent, so I'm more in the middle.

And that's fine. And I will tell you that we're in this community. We don't let ISIS score define us at all. There are people with perfect 10s that brag about it.

I'm saying brag because if you look at who they are and how they've healed, it's worth the brag. What's interesting is you met me as Dr. Williams, but I am seriously a first generation high school graduate.

First person in my family to get a go to college and get a doctorate degree on both sides of my family. So really, when I do speaking engagements, I really have to ask, what are you looking for?

Because I'm going to always talk about ACEs because it's a part of our story. It's part your story too. Yeah, we talked about that and how to utilize that leverage it being part of, you know, now I'm in this process of developing a school.

I left my previous role as a principal to take on the journey of creating a charter school and it's centered around health, physical and mental health.

And how we help kids and students achieve their optimum you know, there's so much going on in the world and there is so many documentation and things on attendance rates and suicide rates, and social media and everything that transpires and all the trauma that kids are going through and at a young age is not able to fully, fully comprehend themselves.

Learning About ACEs and Childhood Trauma

And that's one of the reasons why I kind of left and wanted to build a school that was somewhat a when I was a kid, this was kind of school I wanted, I would love to attend.

And plus some things as an educator I've learned over the past 20 years to be able to say, okay, there's some of these gaps that I feel like is needed in a public school setting and being able incorporate those things.

Yep. Let me be blunt and we are going to do this because let me clear as needed. I think that's what I really liked It's the fact that you are aware of ISIS.

Yes, you have the charter school. And yes, why you're here on the podcast. You're on here, on The Podcast to bring awareness, but I actually have to give you your credit for being somebody that I'm actually witnessing and seeing you make the changes.

Yeah. Cause it's one thing to talk about it and it is one to do it. It's a lot of people talking. But you see it because you've been in a school. You've seen it, because a principal.

Because you're in the community. So people are going to come to you before they come anybody else because they believe in you. They believe who you are.

Not telling a story about your story, you wrote a book. Your not talking about, not knowing about the kids because your been a position. I gotta leverage you!

I have no other choice because at the end of the day, you're a mentor, your role model. What kid don't want to grow up being an NFL football player? But what happens when there is an injury?

And I had several. You know, I appreciate you saying that too, because I think One of the reasons why I wanted to build school because there's a lot of kids in school that are just like me and maybe, you know, because technology is a little different.

But I was a kid who my grades were decent. You know I as a B student and that was just because I made to my mom said only way we can play sports is if we had a 3.0 or better B average or Right.

No sports. So I did just enough to make sure I was eligible to play, whether it be at school or my mom. And so but I didn't understand the value of what I.

Was being able to do at that time as a young man, which what kid understands the. Value of their education. You know, it's not till you get older, you understand how valuable learning is and what you should get should should not get out of it.

But that's one thing I've taken from my post football career is the love of learning. And I didn't have that as a young man. All the skills that I used to become a professional athlete, I learned to put that towards my academics.

Lo and behold, it worked. The hard work, the dedication, and the stick-to-it-ness, motivation, all those things that kept me not missing a practice, not miss in the game, lifting weights, running that I just applied in another sense, they still worked out.

And I think that's one thing I like to tell kids, man, there's you got to have balance in life, you know, and you gotta prioritize some things. There's, if you're that 1%, by all means, go after it.

but there's only 1%, that's the 1% really, that is gonna go from high school to the NFL, if you have that 1%. And you might be, and that fine, but you still gotta have stuff situated and set apart for you.

When you're done playing ball, cause you don't know how long that it's gonna be. My career ended early because of injury.

Building a Health-Focused Charter School

I didn't get the mileage out of my career that I expected or even my talent warranted, I had had the pivot you know i was 30 years old and it's like man you still kind of a young man what are you gonna do?

You know you got to figure out something figure some things out and you, know this path i'd like to say it kind, of chose me i wasn't necessarily thinking about becoming a career educator in a sense.

I was doing that because really I wanted to coach football and basketball too, but specifically football. And it just, once I got in there, man, and talking and learning and being around kids and learn it from some leaders and teachers that I working with, then I like, okay, maybe I can do a little bit more.

So, you know, it started to progress from there. But I think the lesson in that is, is life ain't always gonna go how we expect or want times you have to pivot and sometimes when you pivot that's the path you're supposed to take anyway.

And I found new passions, found a new path. To your point, it really starts with the mentoring and being able to dig into children and hopefully inspire them to get less headaches than I have for myself and people that I know and alike.

So that one reason I enjoy education, man, We all, I mean, think about the people that influenced me, whether it be coaches and teachers along the way, and they still hold a special spot because of the impact that they had for whatever reason.

And I think that's important to me. Let me share something. I was the activity director at Moscow. And the school that I know, so let me share Chicago all the way.

I got all of my education from Chicago. I had the undergrad in psychology, but I didn't know what to do with it. So it was like, what's next? Just trying to find myself.

I got my master's degree first. Again, my masters degree once I get pregnant with my daughter, because I knew I wanted to something when I just wanted do something.

Instead of trying fight, I started off as a sub, and I met so many students that I moved up. When I gave my opportunity as the activity director, I'd already had my master's in special education.

So that's where the ACES acronym actually come in. When you think about those students with emotional behaviors. That's really a stereotype, that's just me, in my personal opinion.

That is where my original study came from, putting kids in the inner city, into extracurricular activities. If you look at the study that I did, the numbers were wonderful.

We're talking about Saturdays, I had the boys three on three basketball tournaments to keep them out of the streets or basketball, you know what I mean?

Like every season we were doing something to get them off of those streets. So you are doing the work. It's what you're saying you were driven to when it actually really was natural, because it's natural to me.

Now, I also shared, One thing that you said that resonated the most with me is this is what we're supposed to be doing. I actually am doing this because with my being in the front lines, they didn't like educated black women.

And so I've tried to get up in the positions. I tried, you know, to advocate for ACEs. And I try to do this. Try to speak on behalf of special education.

Tried to talk about our boys. Trying to support our young women. But I always get the backlash because they look at this and here it is. The Lord placed me in a position where this is what I'm doing globally.

Oh, yeah. Because that shows those kids in the inner city.

Mentorship, Injury, and Finding a New Purpose

Like you said, this is what you know. I was born and raised in Kansas City. Shout out to the Chiefs for real. But living in Chicago and being here in Dallas is still two, three different areas.

Yeah. What you are doing, your book, who you, are your experiences, the things that have shaped you to be who are, is the reason why you're a cycle breaker.

And again, I promise you I will bet money on it. You add aces to that, let these kids know that the stuff that happened wasn't normal. Yes, this happened to me, but these are the steps that I took.

Watch them boys come running. because that's what they're looking for. They're Looking for mentorship, they are looking For guidance. Every boy wants to be a football player.

But what happens when it's a second chance? What happens When it doesn't happen? what happened when It doesn t go your way? I think there's the issue with Shador.

I mean, I Think he's great. but you know, this is this Is what's happening in today's society. Some people want you to succeed and some people don't want You and then life happens.

Yeah, aces is life. Yep. So what's your next step? Yeah. That's what it is for me. You're in a position where you can really change lives and you're already doing it.

What is it? Is there something else that needs to be added that hasn't been discussed? Not necessarily. I think one of the biggest things from educator, mentor, parenting standpoint is You know, I think we all want to help, right?

And sometimes what I'm learning, even with my own son, who's a lot like me, it's okay to just sit in silence in that space, just be around them. I think there's a level of security that people have or insecurity that have in talking sometimes, that vulnerability is hard.

And even from my own book, the little bit that I did share, me and my mom, we'd laugh because she's like, man, I left so much meat on the bone, and I could have gone into a lot of like family history and things like stuff that was struggling through from young men up until adulthood.

and left a lotta meat in the bones. That being said, being vulnerable and being able to share your space with

people publicly, that is hard to do, let alone do it with somebody you love that loves you.

Because for whatever reason, don't wanna seem weak, Don't want to give the upper hand, feel like you got it. And for me, it was conditioned like, I just, cause I didn't want my mom to know I was struggling.

Cause she did the same thing. She want me know she was struggling, I'm the oldest, she's of a single mom with four kids. And you know, so we, and we laugh because I learned my, my behaviors, if you will, from her because she didn' want us to see her struggling and hurt.

You know? She wanted us think everything was okay. So she hid a lot of that from us and, we'd talk about it and now she'd like, that part was the best example.

I said, man, didn''t take it any other way. I understand, you know, and now I think about what that really meant for you not being able to have that release, not having that outlet, being have somebody, I'm your son.

I act like the dad of the house, but I wasn't. But not now knowing you didn't have something, somebody. She had her friends, of course, on a regular where she could vent like that and just let go when she was struggling, when things were hard.

Because I think I've seen my mother cry. And I don't know if I can touch all fingers on one hand. Yeah, and I know she has, I'm sure she does. And one of those is almost like you don't count, it was the passing of her mother when her mom passed away.

So that one, that's assumed, right? But my mom was always strong-willed and she was like the greatest support. Now I still try to impress that woman with everything I do.

But still she's just strong and with three boys and one girl, she tried to raise three young men. And we did okay. Obviously we had some success, but I think you better quit knocking your success.

You are amazing. I appreciate that. It's something that we do with ACES and we talked about it at the conference. We do it unknowingly, it's imposter syndrome.

What's interesting is I find it quite humbling coming for someone that has actually achieved a lot of success. It happens to me all the time. I will tell you, I mean I've walked in rooms and people are like, Oh my God, it's Dr.

Family, Vulnerability, and Imposter Syndrome

Toy. And I'm like is it that serious? But to somebody else it is. So not to interrupt what you were saying, but you agree with you 110% because that single mom, And you being the first born, yeah, it was the daddy.

That's just how households are. I had my firstborn, and I swear, she's so aware. She's like, where are my kids? I'm like girl, these are your sisters, cut it out.

But you have that role. So thank you for giving credit to your mom, because of course she is amazing. And she raised a great young man, And I am sure your brothers are doing quite well.

Yeah, you know, Like I said, my mom sometimes, she didn't give herself grace. And I had to give her validation. I gave her flowers too, and I tried to, every chance I get.

But I did it because we may have failed in other areas where we were successful in others. You know, I think as a parent, you want all your kids to be successful and glowing and just doing just great.

You know, we've had our ups and downs as a family and things of that nature and hopefully we learn from them. But you know the thing about. validation and things of that nature.

I always call it being humble, but I've always suffered, struggled with receiving validation. Um, I'll always dismiss it and give credit to other people or just say, yeah, or I kind of diminish what I have accomplished sometimes.

And I'm working on it, honestly, as we're talking about it. Just being, just receive it be like, thank you. You know, and, um, because I, cause I am quick to pass, pass the credit or pass to somebody else.

But it's okay. That's why, and I shared, you know, my example because trust me when I say, it was like, It's Dr. Williams, like me. I totally get it. But again, I think that's one thing about understanding and learning.

We still have room to grow. positions, like the Lord has put you in a space now, what you're doing in changing lives, you are going to have no other choice.

People are gonna be like, it was Dr. Dyson. Yeah, yeah. You'll be ready. Trust me. Because that's one thing that I'm actually learning. I got a whole, I had to, You would think that, that wouldn't have a confidence score, which I have to.

you know what I mean? Because I didn't know my strength and know potential based upon my past experiences, so trust me, I get it. So I'll ask you this question.

For someone that is starting their healing journey, like starting, they're listening to this podcast, what would you tell them? Oh man. One, be willing to go there and doing therapy and all that kind of stuff.

I think for me, just when I was doing them, it was just being able to say something with somebody that I didn't feel like was judging me. Because I that's a lot of times where why we don't show vulnerability is because we know the people and we we want to be seen any different than when we feel they see us.

Does that make sense? We don' share anything that can be viewed as detrimental to whatever persona or reputation that we have with that person. And it's cost me relationships and things of that nature being distant and just reserved and recluse.

That's my go-to. I tend to go on my little shelf if I feel like somebody's going to have a necessary kind of retreat and get quiet and I can get mean in silence.

I don't have to be mean vocally and things, but my body language and my demeanor, you definitely know something's wrong and just wouldn't be able to open up and go there.

And that's been something I've been working on. So to your question, I think you just got to be able to just be reflective and understand yourself. and be able to just be comfortable with being uncomfortable.

And that's one thing I'm trying to get better at, but when you condition for 50 years of your life one type of way, it's hard. If I recognize something that I am doing now as I get older, I got some younger kids at 14 and 12 now, and they're going through this little life transition with us.

just trying to be more vulnerable and open for them and being able to teach me, this is one of the mistakes I made and this how you can be better than me.

Healing Journey and Advice for Others

But again, like my mother, even our conversation I had with her several years ago when she was talking, we were talking about our patterns and how I've learned different patterns from her and demeanors from here.

And she looked at it as like not necessarily a good thing. That's kind of where I'm at with mine, like, what am I really teaching? How am i really teachin' them?

Because I have failed in a lot of regards in that realm and that space. And, you know, was interesting is, yeah, I've

written that book and That book and that level of vulnerability almost didn't publish it because I was like, man, that's too much out there.

I'm about to call the publisher and the editor and be like no, I am not doing this. But it also, i'm glad I did because on the flip side of that, it was somewhat therapeutic because put it out there to the world a lot of and again that's a lotta meat on the bones.

It was just minimal compared to really what's on in my heart and my head. I just put on to surface level because it was enough that people understand like this wasn't easy.

And I wouldn't like I would just skate through life with not being affected. you thinking about writing that book and what we're talking about and how you encourage people is, you know, for me, that was a level of vulnerability that made me have I wouldn't have never been on this podcast had I not written that and been able to be sharing my story that way.

That sort of thing, And again, there's still some therapeutic sense and even in doing this and having this conversation. And that's part of that journey.

What you tell people, man, it's a continuous journey and I failed. I know I'll fail again and probably fail 20 more times after that one. but still as long as I can, I feel like anyway, as Long as i can acknowledge it when I do something that has been conditioning me for 50 years and I in that moment I think that's growth and that how I'm trying to kind of look at it is here I am doing some of the things I did in the past and let me go back and reflect and respond differently or change my actions a little bit different, be a bit more open, whatever it might be.

And that to me, that's how I have small, very small baby, super baby steps towards that. So I'm nowhere near there, but that is kind of my mindset over the last year or so has been.

Whether it's working or not, it remains to be seen. But I like to believe I am heading in the right direction. You are. You met the ACES educator. Yeah.

We got work to do. So you have to let people know. They know who you are, but where can they find you? Tell us about the book and tell them where they can find.

Because again, I thank you for being here and this is a safe space. I appreciate that. Let people where to find Well, social media, KT Dyson, 87, that's pretty much everything you can find me on.

Snap, I mean, excuse me, Instagram, LinkedIn, Faith, all that. That's KtDyson87. But if you want to just one stop shop, go to kevindyson.com. You can fine me my book.

I've got some merch coming out. Pretty soon and then the book man is called qualified. So I am justified and it talked it really that book is really about what we're talking about man.

Book Details, Identity, and Closing Remarks

There was a lot of self-loathing and that I had to get over, you know, I mean I was first-round draft pick and not in the NFL. Who had injuries never had any injuries up until I got an NFL, and it not just that but mostly that was reason why my career was cut short.

Well, it was that because I had a coach and GM tell me that, but. And overcoming that and not feeling adequate enough throughout my career, I feel like I never achieved what I wanted to accomplish.

I felt like always I let a community, a city down, my family down and just. cycling and working through all that. And again, that's part of the reason the book was written and realized that I had to find my own identity, find a new purpose and find something I was passionate about again to form an identity that was my home that wasn't Kevin Dyson, the football player, or the first receiver taking that or in the in first round draft pick or coming up a yard short

or music city miracle, all the things that have accomplished.

in the world of football, I had to kind of distance myself from that identity to a sense to grow as an educator and as a man. But it's always there and it is part of the story, part the journey, and part why I'm able to do the things as educator, as speaker, author, man, so I don't run from it.

I appreciate it. But yeah, so, you know, people want to go out, check it out. It's quick read. Is this to give you a glimpse of my story, just my journey with my father, my mother, and my brothers, My journey and then fail to now and the lessons I learned through there and how I apply them to my life.

You're a cycle breaker. I'm trying to be. Nope, you are. Say it. We getting this. Yeah, we getting it, yeah. I working with them. Y'all trust? Yeah. You all know how I get down.

Y'all know another episode of Be Victorious. I, again, thank you for being here. And you will see more of a collaborative effort between us both, not just only as educators, but authors in this mission of healing.

So you guys, you know where to find me, I'll make sure I connect with you on LinkedIn and connect you everywhere. But we'll be forever connected through Manifest.

with Mr. Charlie, so I have to shout them out. Thank you again for being here. And you guys, thank you for another wonderful episode of Be Victorious.

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