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. Hello, you guys. Welcome to another episode of be victorious. Y'all know the cycle breaker series is doing its thing.

I love the guests that we have on here. This young lady, what I tell you, she is amazing.

Guest Introduction and Chicago Roots

She could not be stopped. Liberation leadership is what it is. And she does so much of it. Well, I want her to introduce herself. Where are you Christina?

Hi there. I'm here. Hi, Dr. Tori. How are you? I am so good. So excited to be with you today. I am in Chicago more often than I should be, let's be clear.

I've actually been in Dallas for a few years, but I got everything from Chicago. As far as my education, teaching, all of that experience, it came from a Chicago, I did a 25 good years there, and I ended up leaving, nonetheless, my heart is there.

So I gotta connect you to a lot of people because I tell you, y'all going through a lotta up there in Yes, well, I'm no longer there. I've been in Southern California, but most people also think I still live in Chicago because I reference it so much because that is where I grew up.

And that's the city that gave me my social and political formation. Yes. So tell us more about that. Introduce yourself to our community. Yeah. Yeah, so sometimes, sometimes I don't know where to start with this.

How much time did we have? We got some time. Okay. Um, yeah. So I would say I, I started off with some of my, um, locations, my social locations. And, uh, start off by saying I am a proud daughter of Mexican immigrants.

I believe right now, the Mexican part versus just generally saying immigrants is very important because of what's happening in our communities, right?

With the ICE raids, I should say specifically. And I was born on the border. I Was born in El Paso, Texas. because at the time my parents lived in Juarez, or they lived it El Paso, they just were back and forth.

I have family on that side of the border right there. And then at age of three, I was taken to Chicago and that's where my pet parents settled. My mom comes from a long history of, siblings and we have a lot of siblings, a lots of aunts and uncles.

I have lots and aunks that were crossing the border back and forth because my grandfather was actually one of the recipients of one the longest guest worker programs where the United States would grab cheap labor, mend cheap labour right after World War II.

So both of my grandfathers on my maternal and paternal sites are recipients or participated in that guest worker program.

Immigrant Family History and Early Life

And so as a result, both my families have had the privilege, I call it a privilege because it is of being able to flow back and forth between Mexico and the United States because that was one of the benefits that they were offered because of that.

So that's really important to me because I do find myself to have that as a privilege, right? It shouldn't be, migration should be free for all of us to enjoy, both not just within the country here, within these fabricated country lines, if you will, colonial, lines.

But just anywhere in the world, we should be free bodies, right? Just the way that goods are free to ship, to be shipped and flow around the World. In commerce and in capitalism, We should So yeah, that is part of my origin.

And then I spent my whole life in Chicago. I grew up in the community of Little Village, which is formerly known as South Lawndale, for those of you that might be still there.

Like you were saying at the top of the conversation, Dr. Tori, yes, great themes and great people, true tellers and movers and shakers do come from Chicago, and I just wanna shout it out.

from the rooftops because I'm just so proud to be among the folks that are trying to dismantle systems and have folks be embracing of who they are wholly and wholly.

So my whole trajectory in Chicago took me to, well, first and foremost, We were very poor. We lived in the South Side, we had very little access to resources and I know we're going to be talking about our ACEs for and that has a lot to do with it.

And I went to public education. for the whole time that I was in elementary school, secondary school or high school. And then I started, then through, I guess, the push of my mom, because I had no mentors.

I grew up with zero mentors, so I'm the first of three children. My siblings were too young, right? They were young. didn't know how to navigate, you know, she was learning with me how navigate the school system.

So, that's important to name. It's a huge undertaking, right, for an immigrant mom. For anyone, let alone an When she saw that I graduated high school and I was kind of like not doing anything because it was like I didn't have a plan.

She literally handheld me and took me downtown to Robert Morris College. she didn' know where else to take me. That's the only reason I ended up there because I don't know left to my own devices.

What would have happened? So my mom, my parents always advocated for education. There was one thing they did do as a result. The three of us are college graduates.

And I'm so really happy. I want to give my mom her flowers because she did that. She knew enough to be like, my child needs to in college. So I did get my undergrad in business administration.

Then I entered the workforce. Even before that, I'd been working since I was 16 years old. Right. After that, somehow I ended up with a good community of people in Chicago that took me down the route of nonprofit work.

And so of course, Chicago's nonprofit sector is very active, very powerful, interconnected, if you will, right? So I began my journey in nonprofit doing, I started off at Erie Neighborhood House.

So shout out to them because now I'm working with them in a consultancy capacity. It's like full circle. And then that journey really allowed me to see I really credit those experiences and nonprofit, both in the service in this sort of wraparound social services space, as well as in I went on to do lobbying on Capitol Hill.

I want to lead delegations to Central America and Mexico, discovering and uprooting the causes of migration and showcasing and bringing awareness to the origins of how that phenomenon really takes place.

I got a degree, which I just heard on your page, Dr. Tory, that degrees in social work are going to be relegated to non-professional degrees. I went down the rabbit hole on that one because I was like, what is this?

So I do have a lot of masters in Social Work.

ACEs Score and Cycle Breaking

Fast forward to now, all of those experiences, really working in the trenches side by side, my community with black leaders, with indigenous leaders with white folks who are like, we're doing the work and just in immigrant spaces in Chicago and eventually all across the nation really gave me the footwork and the footing, the foundation to where I am today.

Three years ago, I quit nonprofit and I said, well, I want to start my own business because there's some shit I wanna say and do and I wanted to coach women that used to be in my shoes.

And I'm now just kind of like really in this space of liberation for all of us, especially women of color, because that's the only tea I'd want be drinking these days.

Cindy is going to love you. You know, it's already tons of social workers, coaches. We understand our aces and so do you, what's your acing score? So I was like texting my sister because there are significant parts of my childhood that I don't remember.

Wow. Right off the bat. There's an eviction, for example, that my sister remembers clearly. And I feel like I wasn't even there. She said my parents were literally on the street and we were sitting in the car.

Or she's like, I don't remember if like that was our car, but they were like talking about where are we going to go? I remember that at all. That can happen.

It happens because when you're when your Those experiences sometimes, our memory will block out those experiences because they don't want you to experience those things again.

And you know that being in the position that you are. So I can respectfully understand that. But this whole entire time you've been talking, you're been taking about household dysfunction.

You've talking about being homeless. Just being a part of a family that has to go through immigration. That's a big thing that we are talking here recently.

I know you because immigration trauma in Chicago honestly, it's gotten out of control. And so I know that you have ACES score. Let's be clear, we already understand that.

But I think what it is is so many people get so caught up in the score that that's the reason why people are breaking it down so the community can understand it.

It's not about the ACEs score, It is about awareness and what you're doing to do something about it, and you are doing that, so that is what I like. You are in a community that doing it So yeah, thank you.

And so I, based on what I recollect, what my brain allows me to recolllect, I have a three. I feel like there's more, but I'm like, one thing at a time, because.

Yeah. Yes. No, that's real. I would be more. That's true. Because I've heard it several times. And again, it's the awareness that is the key, Because we don't want the ACES coordinator to find us anyway.

You know what I mean? So you've already defined your journey as a cycle breaker. But what is your definition of a Cycle Breaker? My definition, I've never been asked this question, but I think that I want us to understand our circumstances.

And I wanted us understand that the things that we experienced as children were not always quote unquote normal. Right. Yeah, you know, I'll speak from personal like in the Latinx community, we tend to somehow glorify our resilience.

And we then bypass completely why we had to be resilient. Right?

Healing Practices and Self-Care

Like, and and like, why did I have to, me or my sister, why did we have be helping my parents read through the only in English material or like the bill that came, the final notice that wasn't paid, you know, things like that.

So I guess cycle breaking is all of it for me. It's like, not when I'm engaging in conversations with people and they're saying something that is very inappropriate that has to do with that's why you just can't be making light of things around me.

I will be that person that will like well actually I don't think it's quite it quite happens that way or that happens for a reason right and so any I think a cycle breaker is that.

I a think cycle-breaker interrupts the actual cycle of like, even if you're having a fun-filled conversation and everybody's like in high spirits, like I don't want to let something be overridden because I didn't say anything.

And so it shows up for me in a social setting and it obviously is in the professional setting. Cycle-breaking, Like, I want to make sure that I'm now coaching the women that coach from the lens of the systemic impact of how they see themselves, because quite often they come and they think it's a personal failure problem.

My clients think that it is a deficiency that shows on their character or on who they are. It's not until we start to tease out where that comes from.

And so I am interrogating how systems of oppression have have actually caused so much damage in our lives and, and in how we see ourselves, especially as women of color.

So for me, that cycle breaking in those spaces, like in real time, it's not just like a fancy neighborhood. Yeah. No, I agree. And that's why we have to have these conversations.

So let's talk about healing because you do a lot of leadership. You do lot a things and you already have a respectable community. What are some of the healing strategies, habits or support systems that have helped you on your path?

Yeah, that is why I love that question too. Well, Definitely, I didn't know this, but when I was in Chicago, and I began to get involved with some of the movements, marching, in retrospect marching for human rights, for civil rights for immigration rights or worker rights like literally marching was probably a safe haven for me.

Really, it probably was like a because of how community, now it's a little bit, and now marching could be a threat to some of us, right? Like it could very dangerous, but back then, I think I was able to express any emotion or a feeling that I didn't have words for at the time.

And I feel it filled some void of, the emotional neglect, if you will, that I was seeing from home. And this is all in retrospect. I couldn't tell you this back then.

So that was one that, I know, has greatly helped. Another one has been being able to have heart-to-heart conversations with people. Like asking people…

I guess I do credit some of the organizing knocking on doors experiences as like it builds my ability to build empathy for people and get to know myself also.

Right. So I think those are some healing things, just like if I could kind of really use my own work experience. And then like, I've been moving along the more traditional forms of healing, like being in therapy for over a year, straight here in 2019 and 2020, with a trauma therapist that helped me unpack why I couldn't show emotion in public.

Why I literally couldn' cry prior to 2019, I could'nt cry in pubic. I thought it was a form of weakness. Yeah, yeah. Oh, things have changed. And now I'm like, I'll probably cry in this conversation.

Right. So like the floodgates open, because my nervous system was able to just relax. The other thing I do now that is just very practical very every day is walk my dog.

watch nature, touch nature. Like, really, like, look at the plants here. I live, I like to call a, as best I can, a stress-free, drama- free life. Right, of course.

So that I could just really give myself the ability to think and plan and dream and imagine shit that is outside of the confines of what we're seeing right now, right?

So I guess those are my healing spaces and then just like the people around me that have, they breathe life into me now like like a lot of my clients, you know, the boards of affirmation of Yeah, people like you too, Dr.

Tory, that if I need to revisit what is happening, what does this, then I go to pages like yours to find some answers, yeah. And so would you say that those are ways of empowerment not only for yourself, but for your clients?

Yes, absolutely. I use these as examples and as offers or suggestions, and I just really I get to know the client so that I to get know their life or them holistically so I can recommend things based on their lifestyle, right?

Family Support and Closing Remarks

If I know that they are prone to overworking, I really encourage them to look at their calendar. And I make a joke out of this, but I actually mean it.

I'm like, if your calendar looks like it has no white spaces, there's like no clear spaces then there is a problem. And they start to make that little bashful face like, oh, she's talking to me.

Yeah, because we need to build in moments of rest. Yes. Right? We need moments a respite. We needs moments thinking space in your calendar. If you know your nervous system is prone to overwork and over give and care, which most of my clients are that prone.

Yes. Would you say that that's something or a tool that you can use for someone that on their healing journey? Because it's a lot of people that don't know how to begin.

So what would you to say to someone just starting on the healing? Yeah, that something that I actually asked for in the self-assessment form when they start to work with me in beginning.

Because I want to know, I think the question reads, Do you currently have a healing practice? And what is it? Because I want to know what you're already doing so that we can start there, right?

Are we starting at zero? Like you have zero practices? This is your first time, you seeking coaching is you very first-time, then I know that there's a lot more that you need to do, versus somebody that's like, oh, I'm already sitting in fire circles, or I am doing moon ceremonies, I walk every day or I journal, et cetera.

So yeah, I would absolutely tell my clients that if, or tell anybody listening right now that, if you're just starting, um, i think awareness is going to be your first best friend.

Like we don't want to start doing things because you can easily go down the rabbit hole of like, I need to go buy the thing. I needed a journal. No, no, back up, all the way up.

We need sit. If I can recommend one thing is Tuesday, Saturday or Sunday morning in which you have time or you create the time, sit with yourself. Preferably in a quiet space, comfortable and quiet.

And, and use reflection as a mechanism right now. Use reflection. Very good. You don't have to write anything down yet. Yet you could sit and reflect on and bring awareness to the parts of you that you know are craving for something to change.

Right. and awareness to any wounds you might have, that you know something's painful and something, and you don't know, even if you do not know how to get out of it right now, the fact that are bringing awareness it will begin to take you down the road of like, okay, what can I do?

And then after that, It starts with a simple conversation with yourself. After that, you can… Does it feel like your body's telling you, like, we just need rest?

Okay. Can you figure out where you could get the best rest, right? What do you need to do? Is it that you might need somebody to watch your children for that additional, that Saturday morning to take them?

Right? Community access. community interventions, right? Is it that you literally haven't been to a park or to nature in weeks months years you don't remember the last time you bought you've gone to the park that is the closest to you or that you intentionally um took a walk to smell fresh air or if you live close to a body of water and you never you haven't visited it in for in a long time a lot some people that i have clients in chicago they're like oh my god christine i don' remember last night i went to And I'm like, well, we're gonna put that in your, you're going to go to the lake.

Right. For the next month. I want you to to goto the Lake. Um, so that, So like again, We've, not, I don't know, social media, sometimes it's really good.

And then, then it' really bad because then you see all these influencers with like this is what care and healing looks like and they're in these spas and some like exotic vacation, blah, like you don' need to do any of that right now.

Not yet. We don't think about the things that are accessible to us like right now that don t involve money yet. Right. That's what I would say to the person that is first on their journey.

And you are there. You are a cycle breaker. So mom and dad are still here, right? My parents? Yes, they're in Chicago. Wonderful, wonderful. So what are they saying about the fact that you are the cycle breaker and you have done the work?

How is family, how is things going knowing that your the Cycle Breaker in the family? Well, I think there's a couple of us. I like to think that the three of cycle breakers in different ways, right?

I definitely, I'm the oldest, but my sister does significant amount of work. My brother is like, you know, also, uh, and I think by default living with two strong minded sisters also had to pick up some practices, or is engaging in some different practices.

Um, my parents, verbalize like you're a cycle breaker or you are doing things different or anything, any sort of, I don't know if it's awareness, but any information about specifically, you know, doing.

I think in our conversations, which we have a really good relationship with my parents, um, in I our conversation, they show that they're really proud of us and they are really out of me for what I've been able to accomplish, right, and where I'm at.

And they have said things like, my mom, I think maybe I can recall her saying a statement like lo que te propones lo haces, which translates to whatever you've set out to do for yourself, you wanted to, do you done it.

So, even though my parents, my parent both have, they have some college, but not like a formal college education.

And then because it's like they don't have like the formal completed, They don't have the language to verbalize what cycle breaking might mean, but they do affirm some of the things that I've done.

They're definitely proud of my education, of what I'm doing. I wish my mom would ask more, definitely. Different growing up in different communities. I mean, and I'm sure you understand that and know that, but you know, that you feel it, you see it.

They are, they just may have a different way of sharing. But you have to let the world know who you are because you're amazing. Let people know where to find you.

Yeah. Well, I am usually hanging out in social media because I have my businesses there. So you can find me at liberation leadership on Instagram. And that's where I'm usually uploading stories.

I was I just I Just tagged you on a post on the story that was like, I am going to be interviewed by Dr. Tory. Like, and so like hopefully they'll check you out as well.

Um, And then I m also on LinkedIn. So I'll connect there for sure. Yeah. I realized that as I was going through in the follow up, I'll make sure I include you on everything.

So just so you know, this is an amazing episode. I just love that our community is forming itself naturally. And so to have you here, that's another social worker, another leader, and another coach.

that is joining a community of people that are already doing it that. Are willing to accept their aces who are willing. To grow so I thank you so much for being here and you will see of course more of us you guys you.

Will see us I do lunch and learns of. Course you know on Thursdays so. I would love to continue to include you in the conversation because it's so needed yeah.

I'm sorry. Will you join me? Yes, of course. Absolutely. I definitely I was like, what are these spaces talking about? Oh, it's so much we have plenty because there's there are so many people that want to do and what I love about our community people.

respectfully share their stories and share, like I just posted, the barbershop and the beauty salon. That's actually a whole other community that was formed, but we have all joined together in this healing space so we can grow.

And so having you here as the liberation coach would be a wonderful thing for someone that needs that liberation. And that's the reason why I'm excited that you're here.

So I thank you for taking time out of your schedule on a Saturday to talk to me on this wonderful podcast. And there you go, you guys. You can join us too.

This podcast is bringing on trailblazers, psycho breakers, people that are willing to share their story in order to heal. It's another one. Have a great day, you guys.

We will talk to you soon. Goodbye, guys!