

# AFRO EXISTENTIAL Podcast: Guest Dyana Valentine February 202...

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

breakthrough, charged, tension, lie, paid, people, valentine, afro, day, talking, thought, feel, trust, years, teachers, problem, money, brain surgery, popped, helped

## SPEAKERS

Dyana Valentine, Blaine Vanteamer, Henri, Indira Wilson, Sister Rosemary

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B

Blaine Vanteamer 00:02

We invite your for yourself risking and trying and failing a lot, because I am excited about like what's possible right now? How would you define the term breakthrough for yourself? Here's what I was talking about had to be real with myself, because I'm talking about change in my life. How would you define the term breakthrough for breakthrough for yourself.

D

Dyana Valentine 00:24

So whatever pain I'm in, if I'm fighting with it head on, it's very unlikely that I'm going to have what I would consider a breakthrough. It's the transition where I start to acknowledge the value of the tension, the tension has got my attention, enough that I can step back from and say, this is useful to me somehow, because I was not paying attention to this problem. This problem was running the show. And now I can step back from and say, Alright, I see you pain now. Do I have at least one more option than I thought I had yesterday. So where that tension meets one more option that I thought I had yesterday, if I could just rename the problems, that's my opportunity for a breakthrough? I know what you mean. What is your name? I am Dyana Valentine. I'm a college professor. And I teach teachers how to teach students how to learn and seekers how to find their way through the darkness is the most important part and you are listening to the afro existential podcast on the broad way Podcast Network, bring the girl here.

I

Indira Wilson 01:37

Welcome to the afro existential podcast, a podcast and audio play and one. I am one of your host in Darrell Wilson,

B

Blaine Vanteamer 01:45

and Blaine Vanteamer now premium. This season, we'll be presenting a brand new audio play entitled Pandora's trunk, and a new interview series entitled The breakthrough from vision to fruition.

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Indira Wilson 01:56

In this series, we hear from people who took a great idea and made it a reality. We want to know how they did it, and how they overcame the obstacles along the way. We hope that it helps and inspires you to make your great idea a reality. But before we go to commercial, here's a sneak peek of our next audio play Pandora's trunk.

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Blaine Vanteamer 02:16

Pandora Washington is on a quest to find her birth mother. In this scene, she meets Sister Rosemary who tries to explain to Bandura how she was seduced by the new minister of the first and last most faithful harvest and grains Eben Fe church

S

Sister Rosemary 02:35

we shall begin now that you 1511 says is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person but what comes out of the mouth this is a person that you 1511 That wouldn't do because that's one thing to say tasted. You want to have and we'll be right back after a brief commercial break. Hello again,

B

Blaine Vanteamer 04:23

and welcome back for kicking off our new interview series to break through from vision to fruition with a friend of mine and a friend of my mind. Dyana Valentine she is an educator, motivator and self proclaimed instigator and I had a chance to talk to her about her work and her most recent breakthrough.

D

Dyana Valentine 04:44

I have taught at Santa Monica College for 16 years last week. Believe it or not. I teach students success. So I teach students how to go to college I teach them how to navigate different kinds of life and study skills. My favorite three conversations to have as public teachers delight in their craft helping students navigate this incredibly exploitative and oppressive system of education, and helping my peers, my favorite people in the world, helping them make sense to themselves, so that they can help the world be a better place.

B

Blaine Vanteamer 05:20

You mentioned once before you, you felt like you were an accidental business person.

D

Dyana Valentine 05:25

I think when I said accidental, what I meant was, aside from jobs that I worked for an organization or a company, the very first time I ever got paid to speak on stage, the very first time I ever got paid to help an individual the very first time I ever got paid to stand in a classroom and teach the very first time I ever did teaching work. In all those cases, they were someone else outside of me valuing my work and saying, I'd like you did that really well, you seem to enjoy it, can I give you some money to do it over here for us, that's how my business started as an independent contractor, which is really what I've done for about 20 years, it was like being discovered over and over again, and a certain kind of way. And so then once someone saw me and identified me and said, what you're doing is actually worthy, and their people recognize this as a service and will give you money, I was able to get paid from lots of different clients. And I was totally surprised. It was almost like discovering a new market. What's happened recently is that I really felt super strongly that my student success work was really well established, I have a good way of adding new content to that my individual transition talks with with amazing humanitarians and beautiful people, it's really solid, I have been doing it long enough with hundreds and hundreds of people that I feel very good at it. I feel like in practice with within my scope, I feel great at it. And those kind of have found a sort of happy plateau in a way, but the curriculum development stuff and taking the Student Success content that I've created, and actually trying to gift it to organizations, gift it to teachers, gift teacher training, mentor teachers, just on the side for free it I've done enough of it for free. Right, right away. Right. What happened in the fall is I got discovered again, someone said, you've given us a lot of content, you've really helped our organization, we'd really like to pay you out of the grant, how would you feel about that? And I said, Excuse me? Yes, please. Right? I would like to get paid for that. Because there's something about doing that work at an institutional level. That makes total sense to me, as a practitioner, I've done it for myself, I've helped students with it, I've helped my peers and my teachers with it. And now, if I could do it at the institutional level, just think about the number of people I could help I got discovered. So I gifted my work for a couple of months, and I wasn't trying to get a job. I wasn't trying to get them to pay me. I was really just trying to get this content that I worked so hard at distributed about six weeks ago, we had a casual conversation of what if we could support you and pay you out of the grant? Would that be okay? And I said, Yes, please. I'm now training myself to say yes to money. And so then I spent the holidays thinking this can't actually work, can it? Is this kind of work? Is this possible? Did I just get discovered, again, at 52 years old, about to be 53? To do exactly what I've been doing for free for about 15 years, this is perfect timing. It's in a pandemic, my income has been down for two years, like I was really at this place where I was like, I have to figure something out. And I honestly blame, I thought it was going to have to go outside my industry go outside my get a new topic, I thought I was gonna have to get a new topic. So that was the difference between aspirational work, or the idea that the work I'm doing is good. It's reasonable, it's useful to people, and then really insisting that I prove to myself insisting that I find some people who could benefit from it and who wanted it. I found someone who was receptive. We talked about it, and it was exactly the right place to be was it's aligned with my values. And that took my aspiration into action. And that action led directly to this beautiful breakthrough.

B

Blaine Vanteamer 09:33

How would you define the term breakthrough for yourself?

D

Dyana Valentine 09:36

For myself, a breakthrough for me generally comes at the at the nexus of accepting the crisis or accepting and acknowledging the value of whatever the tension is, if the tension is within myself if it's philosophical, if the tension is logistical, so it's it's financial, or it's actually access to a tool or resource that I need if the tension or conflict is emotional or relational. So if whatever pain I'm in, if I'm fighting with it head on, it's very unlikely that I'm going to have what I would consider a breakthrough. It's the transition where I start to acknowledge the value of the tension, because it's given, it's got my attention, the tension has got my attention, and enough that I can step back from and say, this is this is useful to me somehow, because I was not paying attention to this problem. This problem was running the show. And now I can step back from and say, Alright, I see you pain. I see you tension, I see you conflict. Now, do I have at least one more option than I thought I had yesterday. So where that tension meets just a little bit of potential, just a little bit of one more option that I thought I had yesterday, if I can just rename the problem. So the tension usually is built on some kind of lie. It's built on something that says I can't do it, I am not capable of it. I'm the one who's broken. The problem is me. That's usually when I'm living in tension. But when I get to that place, where I say, what if it's not me, that's my opportunity for a breakthrough. And if I can get just a little bit one step past that, and say, I see you problem, be there, give it give it away, like really, literally delegate it, give it away to somebody, let somebody else hold the crying baby for a minute, anything that would give me a little bit of air. So to me, that's where the breakthrough is. It's right at that moment, at least in my life, where I can see I can see the problem for what it is,

B

Blaine Vanteamer 11:44

Who do you think Dyana Valentine was pre breakthrough. And who is she now post breakthrough,

D

Dyana Valentine 11:51

It's almost like it's not so binary as it is cyclical. So I would say that a lot of the work that the personal work that I've been doing in the last four or five years, has been deeply spiritual has been about cultivating trust, cultivating faith and having that having that nourish my resiliency and my ability to tolerate discomfort. I'm really I do have a high tolerance for discomfort. But I don't really enjoy hanging out and maybe people do, I don't think many people enjoy that. But I have had these long periods of feeling really conflicted and really struggling with my identity, struggling with what's possible, feeling like doing is worth money it's worth it's worth living a comfortable life to be of this great service. I've been I've struggled with that. So a lot of my own inner work has been circled around trust. And it's not blind, total Release of Responsibility kind of trust, but it's just enough trust to get me over the next hump, just enough of knowing I'm I'm talking about the right things, I'm doing the right things, I'm just good enough of a person to deserve a little bit of a break or deserve a discovery. Just that little whisper and even cultivating that little kernel of trust for myself within myself. Not intellectual trust, but true, like all body energetic trust, but as right now it's like a little tiny kernel. So before this most recent breakthrough, it was there. And it was this little kernel. I knew I was supposed to have been having those conversations. I knew I was supposed to be giving away my content. I knew I was supposed to be giving my time it felt free. It felt felt delightful. I didn't have any conflict on it. I wasn't even thinking about commerce. But what happened in the moment when someone

turned to me and had that it's almost like what I said do for clients, like one of my clients said, it was like I was living in a bottle of ketchup. I was the ketchup. And I knew that I was in a bottle. And I knew that I was red. And I knew that I was tangy. But you just breezed along, and you just read the label and it said catch up and you said catch up out loud. And I went Oh, gotcha. It makes everything so much easier. And I remember when she said that that was years ago, it was one of the one of the first times somebody reflected back to me what experiencing my work was like, and I think that's what happened for me six weeks ago, is that this really lovely collaborator who was working with just turned to me and said, your ketchup, we pay for ketchup in these parts. And I went, Oh, I'm ketchup. And you pay for ketchup. And it was almost like the acknowledgment of myself not just some some dismembered service or product that I could provide. But me and myself this telephone call. I would like to give you money to make your life easier to support. You was literally on the cusp of feeling like I cannot do this. I need to change my whole career. Do I need to get a certificate and petroleum science or something like What do I need to do right now? I was really at that point, like,

B

Blaine Vanteamer 15:04

I know what the funny thing is I and I think everything, I think you would have ended up getting into petroleum science and then giving the petroleum science away. Like, you would have got the degree in like a year, and then you would have been like, Okay, I need this is great information, I need to give all this away, and you would have been in the same spot.

D

Dyana Valentine 15:25

I know you're too, right. I know, you're too, right. But I would say that's that difference. And it can be in a moment in a day. And I tell the story to say, even though I really do have quite a lot of confidence in what I'm doing. And I generally I don't offer something up to someone unless I feel pretty good at it. And I have exceedingly high standards, however, I can have all the confidence in the world. But if I can't see myself as catch up, and I can't identify myself or orient myself, it's very difficult to see through to inspiration. And I think certainly that's been impacted by the pandemic, I think that's been impacted by the crisis in the world, I just think it's I feel really beaten down by the violence that's happening in the world on many levels. And so that was that was preventing me from seeing the breakthrough. But again, in reflection, I recognize now that many of my breakthroughs that had to do with my forward facing service or business, most of those breakthroughs have had that catalytic aspect of I know, there are some options here, I've just gotten to the point where I'm seeing that the problem is not me. And here's a little angel collaborator to say, I'd like to give you money for that. And it's great. I don't know how to describe it. I don't think that I didn't, I didn't design this this process. I think somebody is looking out for me. But consistently across the last 20 years of my career, it has been the case that I've gotten to the edge of what felt like the darkest night of the soul. But I had, she just popped my head out of it to say, I don't think this is me, or this is really all I don't think this is all mine. And then a little angel collaborator, a real person pops up to say, I'd like to play with you on that. And oh, PS and by the way, we have some money. So I don't want to say that anybody listening as this is all magical thinking it's really not when you start to honor what you have confidence. And by doing. So there have been a lot of times when I've taken pauses, or just sat back on it not really not really shared what I was doing or not really tried to try to distribute what I was doing, where nobody knew, nobody knew. And then if I took a moment and said, Oh, I'm doing this thing over here, and people want what, tell me about that. Show it

to me and I and it reminded me Oh, yeah, you do have to you do have to acknowledge the crowd. We have to honor the craft. Right. Yeah, absolutely. And I think yeah, I think my work right now is in recognize it. So I'm dismantling a foundational lie right now, that's a lot of what I do in my work in agitating these systems that keep us from being able to really enjoy ourselves, enjoy our work, continue making art, whatever it is that we're doing is, and that was, I think that was one of your questions had to do with, with what this breakthrough taught me about myself. So one of the things that taught me and it was I cannot make it up. So within a week of that contract being signed, I had a call with a client and in the call with the client, we found a lie, we found a lie that was underneath a lot of how she does what she does. And it had to do with freedom and how to do with what what you have to do to earn freedom or earn independence. So I went on a walk on the beach, which is another area that I'm trying to do more of trying to allow myself to experience joy, but I went on a walk on the beach, and I sat down and I was looking at the ocean. And I said, you know, I bet there are some lies underneath this difficulty accepting money. I bet there's some lies underneath this idea that you can be a working artist who supports themselves. I bet there's a lie underneath this idea that you're getting too old to be hireable at a normal job, because I've really been thinking a lot about day jobs lately. And I said, What is the lie? What is the lie? What is the lie and it popped up right in front of my eyes playing so what I learned about myself not not is that I have a lie that I'm the only one that I have to do everything single handedly, that there's never going to be a safety net. There's never going to be a buffer so that I can make a mistake, but I'll have some backup. I have this thing that functions underneath a lot of what I do, and it's not that it's unfounded totally. I don't have a trust fund. I don't have I don't have a lot of access to resources in a certain kind of way. But it is a bold faced lie that I don't have help and it's a bold faced lie that these discovery ends doors have not popped up at every turn in beautiful parts of my career, and my creativity and my ability to express myself creatively. It is an absolute lie. So if that's a lie, what is possible that the day before I was sitting at the ocean was not possible that discovering of that lie was what gave me the little bit of air to say, Oh, the problem might not be me.

B

Blaine Vanteamer 20:25

And we'll be right back after message. Welcome back.

I

Indira Wilson 20:32

We are so excited about this new season. And we have so many cool things lined up the prayer, that's my personal favorite, we have a new segment called it makes it easier to do what must be done with our friend, Henri. And he's always gonna keep it real and keep us grounded, and what Afro existentialism is all about.

H

Henri 20:56

I saw on my bill that I was charged on my credit card, the use of the app that I paid for a year previously, I was like, Why am I being charged all over again? And I didn't guess read the fine print that said that this was an annual prescription and that each year, you're going to be charged 15 or \$16, or \$20 for your annual prescription?

B

Blaine Vanteamer 21:16

And was it a prescription or a subscription? A subscription?

H

Henri 21:20

And yeah, it felt like a prescription. And I happen to I look at my stick and I was like, What is that for? So I said I didn't and I missed it by one day, I was supposed to, I was supposed to send them an email or something, telling them do not renew my thing. So I missed it by one day. So I felt like I shouldn't have been charged even though technically, I guess I should have been charged because that was one day. And so I was like, I am not paying \$24 for service, even though I bought the app. T 99. I never use the app for the 1599. One years I just have. So I certainly wasn't paying for another 1599 of an app I didn't use for the first 1599 I call was it was it 59 920-499-2499 I guess they give you the platinum package if you don't call back and tell them to cancel the whole path. And so I called my credit card company. And I was like there's a fraudulent charge on my credit card. I could tell from the woman's voice that I was going to get the otamatone response. I'm so sorry. I can't make any changes to the bill at this time. You could if you really wanted to. And so instantaneously, I got into my my actors guild, and I said, I'm having some difficulty talking to you. Hi, I just had brain surgery, and was released today to come home. And I happen to see the charge on my account today that I was charged. I wasn't even awake yet from the anesthesia. I didn't wake up until the next day because the surgery was so long, they had to give me so much Anastasia. So I had no opportunity to call this to cancel the subscription or subscription or whatever it was. You can get away with this madness. And she said, Oh, I'm so sorry, sir. I had no idea this you. Oh my god. You just had great Aye. Aye. Aye. Aye. Think it was brain surgery. I really can't tell you this because the medication I'm on, know where I am. But what happened to me? And she said, Oh, I'm so sorry, sir. I'm so sorry. What was the charge if you were charged? I was charged. So I'm 2499 for a prescription or subscription? I'm not quite sure what it was. I'm on medication right now I'm talking to you. But I did not want that. I did not want it. And she said What can I say? I just have to catch my breath miss. I'm really not supposed to be talking, especially on telephone. I just like that charge removed from my credit card, if that's possible. And she said oh Certainly, sir. Certainly, sir. We're gonna remove that charge immediately. Who missed? You have made my day which I hope I have many more to go and she said Oh certainly said she said Well, you you get some rest you get some rest and I wish you the best recovery and and get well soon. I think I can only hope so. Especially now with the church being removed. I can press a little bit more comfortably. And she said oh, yes, sir. Yes, yes, sir. Get all the rest. You can't. And I said thank you, Miss. I'm gonna have to go now because I don't know if I feel a little queasy or something. And she said okay, sir. Well, thank you. I'm removing the charge as we speak. And I just thank you, man. I appreciate it. And I hung up the phone I said, the envelopes, please. Hi.

B

Blaine Vanteamer 24:56

I love the fact that you just had brain surgery and you came home and you looked at your credit card bill

H

Henri 25:02

continued a day later

realized a day late



Indira Wilson 25:06

we are so glad you joined us for another episode of the afro existential podcast.



25:11

Please check out our interview with Hannah Shotus and Richard Lawya on the actors gang theatre companies Prusa project and our next episode and take



Indira Wilson 25:19

a moment to visit us at our website, Afro e x podcast.com. For more fun and insightful content, please click Subscribe



Blaine Vanteamer 25:28

and check us out on Instagram @Afroexpodcast. Anything else?



Indira Wilson 25:33

Email us your comments or questions at Afroexpodcast@gmail.com



Blaine Vanteamer 25:39

Thank you to our guest Dyana Valentine. Check out her website at DyanaValentine.com and a special thanks to the brilliant LaShay Thomason who plays Sister Rosemary and her upcoming audio play Pandora's Trunk.



Indira Wilson 25:53

Anything else? I am Indira Wilson



Blaine Vanteamer 25:55

and I'm Blaine Vant eamer. Again, thank you for joining us, and as always have a great day on purpose.