

Disrupt Yourself Podcast

EPISODE 387: TARSHA JOYNER

Welcome to the Disrupt Yourself podcast. I'm your host Whitney Johnson, CEO of Disruption Advisors, where we help you build teams of high performing people -- because organizations don't disrupt, people do.

The power of manifesting something into reality might seem... well, a bit silly at times. It's all over social media, for better or for worse. It can seem silly because we all know it's not as simple as saying it out loud or creating a Pinterest board. Getting what you want, reaching mastery on a curve, it's hard, hard work.

And yet it does start with saying it loud. If we want to turn our dreams into reality, then the first step is defining what you want. If you can't put that dream into words, then it's hard to put that on a timeline, and you risk others swooping in and defining that dream for you.

Our guest today is an expert in manifesting what she wants. Tarsha Joyner is the owner and head treat maker of Mrs. Joy's Absolutely Fabulous Treats, a bakery in Lynchburg, Virginia. Everything from cookies to caramels and tailor-made cakes. And those cookies are award-winning - Tarsha has appeared on several Food Network competitions, winning the Christmas Cookie Challenge in 2015.

It all started with a graphic design class, where Tarsha had to imagine a brand label for an imaginary company. She'll admit it herself - she was a terrible baker back then. But it came down to her confidence, her perseverance, her willingness to dream big - and - keep repeating that dream to herself until it was real.

I hope you enjoy.

Whitney Johnson: Let's start with the power of manifestation. Mrs. Joy's Fabulous Treats started with a label that you had to make in a graphic design class. Give us a sense of when was this? How many years ago was this? And at the time, do you remember what some of your fears were? But more importantly, what were some of your hopes?

Tarsha Joyner: So, I was a student at Lynchburg College, at the time, it was Lynchburg College. It is now University of Lynchburg, but I was a graphic design student, art student, and because I was a working mom, I wanted to get a jump on my project for the next semester. So, I stopped in before the semester, last day and talked to my professor, Professor Bryant. And she was younger than me, probably by about 15, 20 years younger than me. And she's just really smart, amazing graphic designer. And I asked her, how can I get a head start because I had to work full time, still go to school full time, take care of my kids who, I had teenagers at the time. So, if you know that you've got teenagers, that's a whole lot harder sometimes than even dealing with an infant, to be honest. And I just had so much going on. I wanted to start in the summer so I could get a head start for the fall semester, and it just so happened that my son was looking for his first job, and I knew that I was going to have to brand a product from start to finish. So, I created this fake bakery, and I struggled with the name for a little while, but I knew I wanted to give my son his first job opportunity.

Tarsha Joyner: And so, I put him at the farmer's market, the local farmers market, to sell something. And for me, it wasn't about the thing that I was selling, it was about the packaging that the thing was going to be in. So, I didn't really care what it was as long as it looked good in packaging, you know? And so, I ended up coming up with Mrs. Joy. Mrs. Joy is the name that I put on my first bowling ball. I had just gotten married, and it was either going to be Tar, the first three letters of my first name, and the second, the second name was going to be the first three letters of my second name. But Tar Joy just doesn't sound as good as Mrs. Joy. So, I became Mrs. Joy because you could only get six letters on your bowling ball. And, and then I thought, okay, well, Mrs. Joy, that's who I'm going to be, Mrs. Joy, who I'm going to be. And then I, you're supposed to tell who you are, what you do in your name of your business.

Tarsha Joyner: So, I thought, okay, I want to sell some sweets, but sweet can be a derogatory word sometimes. So, I thought treat is never derogatory. So, treats, Mrs. Joys Treats. But I need to describe what those treats are going to be like. And Absolutely Fabulous was one of my favorite television shows. Don't tell anybody because it was not something I should have been watching at that age. It's kind of a little off, but it was one of my favorites British television shows and absolutely fabulous, I thought, well, that is just a marvelous name. So, we're going to be Mrs. Joy's Absolutely Fabulous treats, right? And my son could have cared less. He just wanted a job, and he wanted to make some money, which he did. And that's how it got started at the local farmers market, and we sold shortbread because I didn't know how to bake. I knew how to be an artist, but I didn't know how to bake. And shortbread was supposed to be the easiest thing that you could make. It wasn't. But that shortbread that I sold back then is nothing like the shortbread that I sell now.

Whitney Johnson: What year was this? Is this like ten years ago 15, 20 years?

Tarsha Joyner: That was 2012 when I started the business. July the 7th was the first day that we opened up shop.

Whitney Johnson: So, Tarsha, if you could say something, to the graphic design student of 12, 13 years ago, what would the, what would you tell her? What do you know now that you wish she had known then?

Tarsha Joyner: Oh, I learned so much like it's very important that you realize your worth and that you state it for other people to understand, because it's your job to tell people what you're worth. Because if you let them tell you what you're worth, you'll never be worth anything. And people will always try to get over. So, you have to realize your worth and then let others know it. That's your job. And then you have to have a spine because you cannot run a business without a backbone. People will try to get over you. Employees will try to get over you, on you.

Vendors will try to get over on you. Customers will try. You have to have a spine. And you have to be a good conflict, you have to be good at conflict resolution. You are going to have conflict, and you have to be able to resolve it. And it's very, I used to be very uncomfortable in conflict. I just try to avoid it at all costs. If things happen, I would just pretend like nothing happened because I just didn't want to deal with conflict. And I've learned as a business owner, as a boss, as that person, you have to be able to deal with conflict and you have to be able to resolve it in a positive manner. And that is something that I would tell my 2012 self.

Whitney Johnson: Okay. So, you would tell her, Tarsha, there's going to be conflict. You got to figure out how to deal with it, because otherwise you're not going to be able to move forward. And part of your ability to do that was recognizing that I have a spine, I have a back for a reason, and perhaps more importantly, that sense of self and who you are and being able to convey that and communicate that. Now, one of the things you just said is like help people understand your value. Is there something that you do that you say to yourself, like, what does that look like when you're in that place of knowing your value?

Tarsha Joyner: I'm going to be honest and say that even now I still have an issue sometimes because like in in our bakery, we're in our town. We're not known as the cheapest, and we're probably known as the opposite of that. And it's really hard to live in this small town where people are used to paying lower prices. But you have to be willing to, to be able to stand your ground and say, this is what it's worth, and you can either purchase this or you can go somewhere else and purchase cheaper. But this is what it's worth here. And I have to charge this amount. And it's really hard because times are hard and people don't want to spend money, but I have to spend money in order to make the product. So, you have to be able to spend the money to buy it, or else I'm in business for a hobby, not a business. So, it's sometimes even hard now because I know how hard things are. And I'm the person that says I would never pay that much for that, but I don't have to because I know how to do it. So, for me, I'm empathizing with people going, oh my gosh, that is a lot of money. However, in order for me to be able to stay in business, I have to be okay with that. You know, and.

Whitney Johnson: In order for you to give people the absolutely fantastic or fabulous experience of being able to come into your bakery it needs to be a certain price. That's interesting. That's not where I thought you were going to go. And I really appreciate that idea of here is the, the good, here is the service that I am offering, and this is worth something. This is valuable.

Tarsha Joyner: I'm not doing this for myself. Right. I'm not doing it for me. I'm doing it for other people. And they don't necessarily think the way that I do. So, they may be willing to pay this extra money. Of course they are, because we're still in business. There are people that don't mind paying extra for good things. I do mind paying extra for baked goods because I don't have to. But I know that if I want a camera, I'm going to spend a lot of money on it because I want the best camera. If I'm going to buy art supplies, I'm not going to go get Crayola, you know, cheap things. I'm going to, I'm going to go get the best I can to do what I have to do, because it's worth it to me. If it's worth it to them to come to my shop, they'll be there. And if it's not worth it they won't.

Whitney Johnson: Wow. So good. Okay. So, you've got a shop. But you've also got other things. So, can you give us an idea of what's under Mrs. Joy's umbrella? You've got the physical store. What else is there?

Tarsha Joyner: So, we do classes as well. And I'm just now starting to take that show on the road. I've decided that I'm going to travel the country and take this knowledge, not only just on TikTok or on Instagram. I'm going to take it to their town and sit and people will be able to question me and ask and pick my brain in person. It's just a different experience. I mean, it's lovely to have a zoom meeting and it's lovely to be able to see something on TikTok, but it's a whole different experience when you see someone in person. So, I'm going to, that's one of the things that I would like to, to do more of is to do classes in person where they are. So, we're just branching out now. My first class is going to be in Utah. I'm really excited about it. And then, I'm also working on producing, and this is not anything that I ever thought I would ever say, producing a television show. I mean, I've been on television a lot. However, I don't like being in front of the camera. I like, I have a much better comfort behind the camera, and I like telling others what to do.

Tarsha Joyner: I don't want to be the one being told what to do. I'd rather be behind the camera. So, I decided that, and I worked with a few production companies, but what I didn't like is that they were trying to force me into

a box, and I don't. I'm not that person. I'd feel like a caged animal. I don't want to be forced into a box. Look, this is my idea. I'm giving it to you. Why are you telling me what to do with it? So, it's like, fine, I don't have to be on television. I'll just put it on YouTube. Right? Well, God has a way of making things happen, making things happen for you. Even if you don't see the big picture. He always does. And even though in my head I'm thinking I'm just going to take it and put it on YouTube, one of the producers that I had worked with before circled back around with me and decided, we're going to put it on a streaming service, and I'm a little excited about it.

Whitney Johnson: Oh, okay. Well, let's talk about some of the, the television work that you've done. So, you've done a few food reality competitions. Tell us about those food reality competitions. So, when you're talking about the producer that reached out to me, give us give us some background, some of the competitions that you've been on, what did you do? What were they?

Tarsha Joyner: So, the very first one I did was back in 2015, and that was right when I first started baking, I didn't know. Look, I went on that show with five recipes. That's all I had. And I was like, God, if it's meant for me to be here, if it's meant for me to win, let these five recipes be enough, you know? And they were, and I, and I did win. And that was my first taste of, wow, this is something I could do on a regular basis. And this is fun because the anxiety level is up there, However, I thrive on that. It's like competing for me is just so much fun. I could have been, you know, an amazing athlete had I gone in that direction because I love competition. So, every two years. And the reason why it's every two years is because these contracts are very restrictive. You're bound to this production company for this amount of time. And you can only do this thing for this amount of time. And we're going to put you over here on the shelf, just in case we want to use you until this contract runs out. So, every two years I would do a show. So, the Christmas Cookie Challenge on Food Network was the very first one that I did. And it opened my eyes to what was going on. And if I was just a good little girl, I'll be able to do this all the time, you know? And so, then the next show I did was Dessert Games. And I didn't win. I should have.

Whitney Johnson: Of course you should have.

Tarsha Joyner: But I didn't. And I thought, oh my, I don't like losing. This is horrible. I am a horrible loser. But I was very graceful looking on television. So, as long as I conveyed that it was okay. And then I did the Halloween Gingerbread Showdown, which was hilarious because I had never made a gingerbread house before. I did that show, and I learned a whole lot while I was doing it. And I have this newfound addiction for making gingerbread houses because they are just the most fun thing. It's another medium for me to work with when it comes to art. And then I did Project Takeover, where they came and redid my shop, and that group was from Canada, it was Food Network Canada, and it was just right at the beginning of Covid. It was like they came and filmed at my shop. And then the following week everything was on lockdown for Covid. So, we just got right. It was just right in under that window before they shut everything down. And that was a wonderful experience, having those people come and building relationships with different people that I would talk to in the future about production. And then I did, um, Crime Scene Kitchen with my daughter, which was the most traumatic because, because it was.

Whitney Johnson: A crime Scene or because it was your daughter or both.

Tarsha Joyner: Both. No, I'm just kidding. It was high anxiety for an extended period of time, like the other shows were like a week or less. Right. Crime Scene Kitchen was for like six and a half weeks, and I had high anxiety for six and a half weeks. And I've never been that high anxiety for such an extended period of time. It's like I needed therapy when I was done. I didn't get it, but I needed it, and it's really hard for me to watch the show even now because I get anxious all over again just watching it.

Whitney Johnson: Yeah. That's interesting. It's interesting. Just a quick side note is like, maybe you should write therapy into the contract. Jk, not entirely, but I was actually over, you know, the last couple of weeks I was going through my closet and like, culling clothes that I don't want to wear anymore. And I was having this conversation with my daughter and she's like, but that's really cute on you. Don't you want to continue to wear that? And I said, no, because I don't. It reminds me of who I was at that time or the experiences that I was having. And I don't want to remember that anymore. I want to move on. And so that's I just thought of that when you talked about the

Crime Scene Kitchen is that you're like, I can't watch this because it reminds me of those feelings, and I don't want to remember that.

Tarsha Joyner: Exactly. Exactly that.

Whitney Johnson: Mhm. Interesting. So, what is there about food reality competitions that we wouldn't know sitting on the couch?

Tarsha Joyner: I, I don't know that I can expose a whole lot because you know, written in the contracts there's things that you just can't talk about.

Whitney Johnson: Okay. Fair enough.

Tarsha Joyner: But they were all so different. Each show was so different because they were different production companies. But I guess the one thing people want to know, and I guess it varies by show, is it, is the clock really ticking? Oh, it's for sure really, really ticking. And it's hanging over my head like this sword of Damocles the entire time waiting for that, that sword to drop. And it is the most stressful thing. And I don't care if you are a seasoned pastry chef or if you are brand new in the game, that clock is a leveler of experience. Like there, there's nothing that you can do to get out of the fact that you are in this kitchen. The clock is running and all of your sense just kind of goes out the window. Like, you just, everybody the same level at that point.

Whitney Johnson: Interesting, interesting. So, you mentioned when you talked about your very first, was it the Christmas cookie challenge? That was the first one?

Tarsha Joyner: Mhm.

Whitney Johnson: Did they find you or did you find them, I mean that's like a pretty, that's a pretty big thing to go from, I think I want to start, I have a label and I think I'm going to make a product, and I think I'm going to do now this bakery in 2012 to now, in 2015, you're on the Food Network. Did they find you? Did you find them? Was it a combination of the two? I'm just wondering how this dream unfolded.

Tarsha Joyner: So, what happened is when I first started baking, I felt like I needed to research all the ways that I could research. Of course, there's Google and YouTube, but what people don't realize is that I also learned a lot in Facebook groups. There is a Facebook group for everything you can imagine. There's a Facebook group for it. So, when I wanted to know what everybody else was doing at the time to make money, I went to these baking groups and started just trolling to see what was going on. And that's where I picked up cookie decorating, which makes my soul sing, like I don't do a whole lot of it at my shop, because you can't really make a whole lot of money off of it unless you charge an exorbitant amount of money. And I do which is why I don't do a whole lot of it anymore, because people don't want to pay for it, and I'm okay with that. But at the time, I was so in love with cookie decorating because I'm like, this is a whole nother medium that is art. And I could just take what I do on canvas and do it on these little cookies that I baked.

Tarsha Joyner: And it was just mind blowing for me. And so, I would hang out in these groups and in one of the groups, this cookie, huge cookie personality. Her name is Julia Usher. She has a whole Cookie Connection website. And she, where all the cookies go to post their brag pics. She posted in the group that Food Network was looking for cookie decorators for a brand-new television show, and I thought, what the heck, I'll try it and see what happens. And turns out, the personality that I have is what they wanted. And at first, it's about personality. And will you make good television? And second, it's about can you do the thing we need you to do? So, first personality and then talent and ability. And because I am wide open at all times, even when I write, the way that I speak is how I write. That's how they pick you up. And then you also have to have proof of what you do. And most of the time back then it was proof came after they talked to you. Now they kind of troll your social media to make sure that you have images.

Speaker3: Yeah. And interesting. So, you basically signed up and they're, I think that's fascinating that they're I mean they're casting a show. They're like is she, does she have the personality that we're looking for? Check. Can

she make the cookies? Check. We want her on the show. And then one thing you said, which was a little bit of a throwaway, but I think is really important, is that once you get on the show, you're a good citizen. So, if you're a good citizen, you play by the rules, then they'll have you back. If you're not, then they won't have you back.

Tarsha Joyner: They won't. And it's written in the contract. It's written in the contract that if you do something that reveals the trade secrets, that they can sue you, and there's a certain dollar figure in there. But I, like I said, I'm a sore loser, but I'm not a bad loser. Like, if I lose, you're definitely going to see. I'm not happy about it, but I'm not going to go try to tear everything down because I've lost. Right? And some people are not very good sports, and I learned to be a good sport. I just didn't learn to be right.

Whitney Johnson: You want to win, but you're still going to be good sport about it.

Tarsha Joyner: You want to win!

Whitney Johnson: You're going to still shake people's hands at the end of the game. Okay.

Tarsha Joyner: Well, whoever said it's not whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game obviously lost. They obviously lost. That's why they said that.

Whitney Johnson: Okay. So, I want to take a step back for a second to your childhood. So, you grew up in foster care? Father left the family. Tell us more about what do you carry from that time? What are, what you know as you make meaning of your life, how do you make meaning of that experience and how does it inform who you are today?

Tarsha Joyner: So, what I look back and see now is that I had a lot of adversity, a lot of trials early on so that by the time I've gotten to this point, honey, I could deal with just about anything, you know, because I've gone through some of the worst things you could possibly imagine as a child. And what I also learned is that children are very resilient, and people don't give them the credit that they deserve. Yes, they go through hard things, and they might go through bad things, but they are very resilient, and they can get over it very quickly and move on to the next thing. They're very forgiving. They're very easy to move on if you allow them to do so. A lot of parents, enable their children in such a way that they don't allow them to be that person. You know, some are a little bit more delicate than others, but if we really give them the opportunity to deal with their trials, they will. They will. And I've learned as an adult, a lot of people have not learned how to deal with adversity, but I got a good education early on. That's how I look at it.

Whitney Johnson: It's interesting. So, I think, I think hearing you speak about this is you're like, okay, I went through a lot of really tough things. I mean, the fact that you were in foster care says a lot. And you've learned how to deal with adversity and be resilient. What I didn't expect you to say, and I think would probably be something that we don't tend to think about is how do we make sure that we allow our children to have difficult experiences so that they can learn to be resilient as well, and to trust that they will be able to bounce back from difficulties. Don't prefab it but allow them to struggle.

Tarsha Joyner: So, I think that some people feel that they need to solve their children's problems for them. They need to fix their problems. And what I've learned is that when you make choices, you either make a good choice or a bad choice, and most of the time when we're doing that, we know what we're doing. We know that we're making a good choice, and we know that we're making a bad choice. Not like if you're coming to a fork in the road and you don't know which way to go, you don't know which choice is good or bad. Most of the choices that we make in our life are not like that. They're usually. This is clearly marked the good angel. And that's the devil sitting on your shoulder. And you are leaning toward the devil because that's your that's just who you are. Well, when you make those poor choices, you have to understand that there will be consequences to follow. And when you remove the consequence from your child, then they don't really learn a whole lot of anything. And in order for them to be able to learn, they need to be able to suffer the consequences, even if sometimes we have to suffer with them because we no one wants to see their child suffer.

Tarsha Joyner: But I do want to see my child learn. And in order for me to be able to have them get the experience that they need to make it without me here. Because you're not going to always be there, and you never know when you may be removed from the picture. In order for them to be able to learn what they need to make it on their own. Then you have to allow them to suffer their consequences. But I will say I didn't have the opportunity for someone to say, okay, I'm going to shelter you and I'm going to save you and I'm not going to, and I'm so grateful for that. I am so grateful that I learned those lessons early on. And not at 40, not at 50, not when it was later in life, because it makes it really hard if you don't have that thick skin that you developed over that time, it's going to be really hard to deal with the adversity when it comes.

Whitney Johnson: For sure. Hmm. Interesting. I have a follow up question for that, but I want to come back to that in a second, because I think I might know the answer to it. So, talk to us about a day in the life of Tarsha. So how early do you get up? What does a day, what does a typical day look like for you?

Tarsha Joyner: So, I, it has taken me a long time to get to this point, but I don't get up as early as most people would think because, you know, I have processes in place so that we don't have to. I am not an early bird. I do not like getting up early. When my children were in seminary, it was the hardest part of my life because I'd have to get up and take them to seminary, sleep in the car and then take them to school, and then come back home and get ready and go to work.

Speaker3: Okay. Sorry. What's, just clarify what, I know what it is, but can you. So, what's seminary?

Tarsha Joyner: So out here on the East Coast, we take our kids to seminary before they go, seminary is when they go to church to learn about the scriptures. It's like a class. But they, each year of high school, they learn a different set of scriptures each year. And all of my children went to seminary, which was an hour before school started. So, school starts at seven, so they had to be at seminary by six, which means we have to be up at 5:00 in the morning to get them to seminary, take them to school, and then get back and go to work. And I value sleep. Sleep is very important to me and to have to get up early is just, I'd much rather stay up late than to get up early. And that's basically what I do. I do a lot of work at night at my bakery so that it's prepared for the next day, so I don't have to get up early to go. But then I do have early bird employees that don't mind getting up early. So, I let them go do it. And they have all the recipes that I allow them to have. There are some recipes that I keep secret, and the others they make so that I don't have to get there early, and I trust them to do what they're supposed to do.

Whitney Johnson: So you're typically then you're working until like midnight or something. Like what, what is it, like talk us through a day.

Tarsha Joyner: So, I'm getting ready to be brutally honest about some things, and people may not be ready to hear this conversation, but it is what it is. So, I, we prepare in bulk and then we freeze a lot. And so, then we only have to take out what we need and prep it to put out for our customers.

Whitney Johnson: Yeah.

Tarsha Joyner: I talked to a pastry arts magazine about such things because people are putting themselves under so much pressure. There's two ways of doing, there's two ways of doing it. Make a whole bunch of stuff, put it in a case and leave it there until it's sold. So, you're going to get old stuff, or I can freeze it in its best state, keep it there until I need it, and then put it out. And it's just as good as being freshly made. And we only freeze it for a couple of days. It's not like it's in there for months and months, it's just for a couple of days. So, on the two days that we're closed, we prep for the week, put things in the freezer. Unless you have a custom cake order, then we make it the day of. So, I spent a lot of time getting up in the morning, going to the shop, seeing what we need, running to the store, get it if we need anything. Otherwise, I'm there with my employees and recreating until it's time to get off work. And then I come home. And I'm an empty nester now, and my husband and I spend a lot of time. Date nights are any night of the week we want it to be. And we spend a lot of time now enjoying each other's company. Whereas before we just work, work, work.

Whitney Johnson: Sounds...I don't know why that would be controversial. Maybe within the industry, the fact that you freeze is controversial, but I'm like, that sounds pretty smart to me. And if it tastes good, I don't care.

Tarsha Joyner: Exactly.

Whitney Johnson: And then you've got the, you've got work life fit, which sounds lovely. So, you talked earlier about knowing your worth and knowing your value for someone else because you, you do brim with confidence. For someone who is listening to you and saying, you know, I want this too, but I don't think I can do it. I don't know if I have the confidence in myself to do it. What would you say to them to just start? What, like what's one baby step that they could do?

Tarsha Joyner: So, when I think about what I did to start this business, it wasn't, it wasn't like I thought, oh, this is going to be hard. I'm not going to be able to do it. I'm not going to be able to. It was like, I don't have the fear button in me. I think it, I think there's a stupidity button there because I don't know what I don't know, but the fear button is just not there. Like, I'm afraid of lizards and I'm afraid of spiders and critters. But when it comes to things regarding money, I never really had any anyway. So, to lose money isn't that big of a deal. To me, money is not something that runs my life clearly because I never have any. But fear also is not anything that runs my life because fear is of the devil. It is not something that God has put into us to rule our lives. We are, we are not meant to fear if we have faith, and I if I pray and say, Heavenly Father, I want to do this thing, why would I be afraid? Then, after I've asked him to help me do this thing because he will help me do it, if it is meant for me to do, and if it's not meant for me to do, I trust that he knows better than I do, so then it wouldn't happen. But since it did, clearly, I'm meant to do this thing. So, let's just get to it. Let's just do it. So, if you pray and you have faith that he's going to answer your prayers to the best of his ability for you for your benefit, then get to it. Don't sit there and worry about what? What if, what if, what if you already asked for it? Do the thing.

Whitney Johnson: Oh, I love that. So inspiring. So good. All right, so when you're not baking or running a business, um, do you have any fun hobbies? Like dodgeball?

Tarsha Joyner: So, I used to do the dodgeball all the time, but my body is not in that state. Like I have to consider if I break my arm or if I break a finger, I won't be able to work the way that I used to. So, I have tamed myself a lot because I used to. Oh my gosh, we used to play it hot and heavy all the time and I would do dangerous things. But as a business owner, I have to consider the fact that if I'm out of the picture, things are going to go downhill. So, I have calmed my hobbies a little bit. Like I quilt. I love to quilt, I sketch, I paint, I love to sketch, I sit at church on Sundays, and I sketch in order to help me stop the racing in my brain, because my brain is always racing with ideas. So, to calm down and be able to listen to the person that's speaking, I sketch, and I have been sketching my family for the longest time and I plan to write things. After I fill this sketchbook. I'm going to go back and write things about these people so that when I pass away, they'll have this to, this is how I felt about you. This was my journal kind of thing. And then the quilting. Nothing relaxes me more than to touch beautiful fabrics and to put them together in a way that's pleasing to me. To me, this is the thing that I do for myself, not for someone else. Even though the quilt ends up going to someone else, I'm not creating them for other people. I'm creating them for my entertainment, for my joy, and it brings me great peace to do that. Color is something that, vibrant colors is something that just brings me great joy.

Whitney Johnson: Mhm. As I can tell by the wall behind you and the beautiful turquoise outfit that you have. So, so what are some of your upcoming dreams you alluded earlier to this idea of a television show. Tell us more about that or any other thing that you've got in the hopper that you're excited about.

Tarsha Joyner: So, I have this idea for a television show where it would be a travel baking show. But it's not just about baking because for me it's not just about the food. I mean, there's plenty of travel food shows. For me it's about the people that I'm going to bake with. And they have these wonderful stories that they have to tell through the food that we're baking and also it helps us to talk about genealogy, which is another thing that I'm kind of passionate about. And so, for me, food memories help us to tie to other people from the past or tie us to people in the future, just like our ancestry does. And so, the name of the show is going to be Baking Memories. And so, we're going to be baking memories in the kitchen, whether it's a recipe that some long-lost relative had, and you don't know how to recreate it, or if it's something you want to make and it's something you want to pass down to future generations, we're going to be baking memories in the kitchen.

Whitney Johnson: I love that. When does it start?

Tarsha Joyner: Well, I filmed two episodes already, and I even did research on what's the best way to do it when you have no money to do it. And I listened to these guys that became these prolific directors for movies of right now. And they said to go to a college that has a film department and see if they will help you in your endeavor. Doggone if I didn't do exactly that. There's Liberty University here and their production department, they have a cinema like film, photography, film department that makes movies, but then the other ones produce shows, and they have, like, the most amazing state of the art everything on that campus. And they made it a semester project, and they filmed a pilot episode and the first episode for me, and it was an amazing experience. And so, this was just to help me get started, and this is to help me learn how to. And I'm even thinking about going back to school just so I can do it more, because I love software. You know, I went to school to be a computer programmer. It's not that I can't do it, it's just that I don't know what the tricks of the trades are at this time, because I've been out of the industry for a while, you know? So, I need to get back in and see what people are using to produce all the things and then get to it.

Whitney Johnson: Wow. Okay. And you said you had a producer reached out to you. So, do you already have a distribution channel for this show or you're still in the baking phase?

Tarsha Joyner: So, what happened was we worked with several production companies, and I say we because it was me and my daughter. But what I know about myself is that I didn't want to work with her on my first show. This is a me thing. And they kept putting us together because our personalities are just so dynamic together. And I get it. But that's not what I wanted. And so, the last company I worked with, I said, you got six months. They give me the contract and I sign it, but I didn't sign it until they put a time limit on it. I'm like, you got six months, and after that it's back to me and I get to do whatever I want. You don't get to table this and put it on the shelf until you feel like doing something. You got six months and it just so happened right at the end of the six months, is when Liberty came to me and said, hey, can we work on this project with you? And I was like, absolutely. And they have been just amazing, honestly. They've been so amazing. And the, it's been a little painful because, you know, we're all learning together. So, the first, the first episode I wasn't as pleased with, but the second one, I can't wait till that gets shown. And so, the person that were the six-month contract was he came back to me, and he said, hey, I'm not working for that production company anymore. I'm doing this, and would you like to? And I said, okay. I hadn't planned on putting it on a streaming service, but hey, if you think that's what I should do, then hey, let's do it.

Whitney Johnson: And here you go. You've got the show ready to go. So, if there's a link that you can share in the show notes so that people can go to it, that would be absolutely fantastic.

Tarsha Joyner: I will, but it's still in post-production. I haven't even seen footage yet. And I want to see footage so I can see what I need to do differently.

Whitney Johnson: Right.

Tarsha Joyner: So, in the next episode, because I plan to travel somewhere outside of Lynchburg for this one and be able to do what I need to do right.

Whitney Johnson: To what you said earlier. You may suffer, but you want to do it in a way that you can learn.

Tarsha Joyner: Exactly.

Whitney Johnson: Okay. So, as we wrap up, um, what's been useful for you in this conversation?

Tarsha Joyner: Well, you know, some sometimes it's helpful for me to see that, yes, you have accomplished some things and talking to you helped me to see that. Girl! You've been doing it, and you don't even know. You don't even because you're so stuck in the mire of doing the things you don't look down and see. Oh, wait a minute, you're doing the things. And talking to you has helped me. Every time you say something that I've done or, you know, or an accomplishment, I'm like, dang! In my in the back of my head, I'm going, oh my gosh, you did that.

You did that. Kind of like my sketchbooks. When I look at my sketches, I'm like, oh my gosh, I can't believe I did that. Did I do that?

Whitney Johnson: Right, right, right. So, it's just holding up that mirror and giving you a time to reflect, to say, oh, when I look at the arc of my life, I actually have accomplished a lot. And more importantly to what you just said. You are in your life right now making things happen. Like things are in the oven. Okay. Um, any final thoughts to wrap up?

Tarsha Joyner: You know, I get the opportunity very often to talk to young people and young people that were in similar situations to me. And one of my favorite things in the world to do is to be able to talk to young people that are in the mire, so to speak, to give them a glimmer, to say, hey, you know what? It's not going to always be that way. Make good choices now so that when you are out of that mire, you will have started the foundation of making good choices in the future. And I think that every person that has the opportunity to do that should do that.

Whitney Johnson: Mhm. Every person who has the opportunity to give people a glimpse of what the future could be, to take that responsibility, it's really powerful. Tarsha thank you so much. This has been...absolutely fabulous.

Tarsha Joyner: Thank you for the opportunity. I appreciate you.

What I'm taking away from my talk with Tarsha is that first, you have to be willing to dream. Then you have to define that dream. And the crucial part – trust yourself to rise to the occasion, baking puns aside. It's like she said to herself before that very first Food Network challenge. "If I'm meant to be here, let these five recipes be enough." It's that faith she has in herself that has left me so inspired by our conversation. Even if you're the least experienced person in the room, never be meek about your desire to win.

Because just like you manifest positive change into your life, if you prime yourself with negative thoughts, you'll probably end up carrying that through into your actions, too. It works both ways. There's a real power in defining the future with words and thoughts, so we have to be deliberate about what we're telling ourselves.

Tarsha had to learn that early as a foster kid. She said it herself – she went through some of the worst times in her life when she was a child. Tarsha had to learn to shape her own future because no one was going to do it for her. And now she's giving back that magic of manifestation when she talks to kids in that same situation today, showing them that, hey – if you take the time to define your own worth, your own path, no one can take that away from you. And if you nourish yourself with those affirmations, you'll find that faith in yourself rewarded a hundred times over.

For more on manifesting your culinary dreams, I'd actually recommend [last week's episode](#) if you haven't already heard it, with Betty Lu, CEO of Confetti Snacks. If you're looking for more advice on building that sense of faith in yourself, there's [episode 280](#) with Brooke Romney. And if you're having trouble putting that dream into a mantra you can repeat to yourself, take a listen to my talk with StoryBrand's Donald Miller, [episode 365](#).

Thank you again to Tarsha Joyner and thank you for listening. If you enjoyed today's show, hit subscribe so you don't miss a single episode. If you want to know more about how DA can support you and your organization through upheaval and change, you can reach us at workwithus@thedisruptionadvisors.com.

Thank you to our producer, Alexander Tuerk, production assistant Etta King and production coordinator, Nicole Pellegrino.

I'm Whitney Johnson.

And this has been Disrupt Yourself.