



The Millennial Life

podcast

with Liz Higgins

Episode 32: Navigating Life & Conflict In The Family Business, A Conversation With Nike Anani

Liz Higgins (00:02):

Hey, y'all! Liz Higgins here, and welcome to the Millennial Life Podcast, where my main goal is to share conversations that will inspire you and drive you toward the life and relationship you desire. I'm here to share what I've learned as a licensed therapist and relationship coach specializing in millennial relationships and wellness, as well as transformative conversations with other professionals. Thanks for listening and enjoy today's episode!

Liz Higgins (00:34):

Hello... hi everybody! Thanks for tuning into another episode. I'm telling you, I've been on a roll with these interview episodes and they are bringing me so much joy because it's a ton of fun to connect, especially with people just online, where we have made connections. And we're oftentimes far apart from each other! Today's guest is speaking all the way from Nigeria. I'm here today with Nike Anani. And she is a succession specialist, a speaker and author, and does business coaching. So Nike, welcome!

Nike Anani (01:12):

Hi, Liz! Thank you so much. I'm really excited about our conversation.

Liz Higgins (01:17):

I know, this is so cool. And before we hopped on, it's so funny, you were sharing that you're actually moving to Texas. How random is that?

Nike Anani (01:28):

Who would have thought, who would have thought...? Um, this year started, you know, um, quite rough for us as a family. And, um, at the start of the year I had no clue we'd moving to Texas. I thought my life would be here and by Easter time was when it was clear that we'd be moving by July. So a lot of transition at the moment. Yeah. Packing up the whole house.

Liz Higgins (01:52):

Oh my gosh. I can't imagine! That's a long ways to go, but just know you'll be, you'll be welcomed with open arms from me. I won't be too far away. So very cool. And I'm really looking forward to this conversation because I think people listening are going to relate, even as we talk about family relationships, and business, and stuff... Like this past year has just been a lot. And it's led to lots of big changes and transitions for people. So, um, I know you've got a blend of kind of the personal story, and then how you are helping clients out there in your business. So I'm excited to talk about this! Tell us a little bit about what got you on this path. What got you into the work that you do?

Nike Anani (02:34):

Yeah. Um, I always say to people that it wasn't an opportunistic thing, just, 'Ooh, where's the need? You know, where can I make money?'. But really inspired by my personal journey. So family business has been in my life, my whole life. My parents started off the first family business in the family the year I was born. (I'm the oldest of three.) And so, um, it had been in my life, my whole life. And then at nine, we moved to the UK - my mum, my brothers, and I - for my education. And I worked in corporate for a few years after college, but I found it very hollow. Honestly. I just found corporate wasn't for me.

Liz Higgins (03:14):

How did you know, how did you know that?

Nike Anani (03:18):

It's just so boring! The most exciting part was my colleagues and friends. I loved the culture of the organization, but it was just like, actually doing work, the actual like "nine to five" (not the go get a coffee, go get some lunch, and after work socials) the actual work, like you're at your desk doing your work on your own. I was like this isn't life, but I don't know what is.

Liz Higgins (03:40):

You're a relationship person. I can, I can hear that.

Nike Anani (03:44):

I'm a connections person. And I didn't know that at the time. I wish I had a lot more awareness of self growing up. And I feel like our education kinds of robs us of, um, what we really need to thrive in life. Um, we focus too much on technical skills and capabilities as opposed to really self-reflection and also understanding other people. And I wish I'd had the understanding and awareness of where my strengths lay, what my values were, as a team to be better guided. But in any case, I'm thoroughly bored. So I called my dad. He was still in Nigeria building the business. And I was like, "I can't do this. Um, I don't know where I see myself, but not here." And he was like, "Why don't you come to Nigeria for three months? And I'll show you the real business world. I'll show you a few projects, introduce you to a few friends.

Nike Anani (04:38):

Maybe you get inspired. Maybe it's just that you need a change of industry." So I started applying for business school. Let's do an MBA in London business school. And so the plan was to come to Nigeria for three months, go traveling for six, go back to college for two years... Hopefully by then Nike would have discovered herself, right. But I got to Nigeria and I loved the entrepreneurial life. I was just like, yeah, this is cool. And then became more exposed to the business that my dad had been building. Um, and I've really enjoyed working alongside him. And I found it really a lonely place as a business owner. Well, my friends, they were working in corporate or, like, had "tidy, normal" jobs where they didn't have this weird dynamic of that boss where like, this is constant endless meetings, you know, informally in front of the TV or at the dinner table. And you can't get away from her or, um, they never stopped.

Nike Anani (05:38):

Because it's like this hobby we all have. Right? It's fun. We're always having fun talking about it constantly. And they didn't have this huge responsibility either. I felt like for my age and the level of work experience I had, many have this cover of like, you know, in corporate, you've got so many

layers of people above you and it can be quite comforting, but I felt really quite naked in the family business. Um, and I didn't know, um... There were no, there was no community of other family business owners out here. There were no advisors that were specialized in family business ownership. And then I became really like... I noticed that family businesses were so prevalent out here, but you would - you wouldn't see them last for more than a generation. Typically only 2% of them would outlive the founder. Compared to that, it's three globally.

Liz Higgins (06:41):

Wow. Yeah.

Nike Anani (06:43):

And then a friend of mine, she lost her dad and I saw that 2% moved from being this flat statistic to coming to life. And I was like, this is not normal. Like, um, what can we do about it? So I became trained up as a certified family business advisor, started my journey, working with clients, helping them with succession planning, um, so that we see more multi-generational businesses and multi-generational wealth.

Liz Higgins (07:12):

Oh, I think that's so amazing. And you're in such a, a needed niche, you know? Because I think (especially for the millennial generation) there's more and more entrepreneurs now coming out of this generation. But I, and I don't know what all businesses look like, but I have a wild guess that when people start that and they start their businesses, they're not necessarily thinking that far ahead on, like, multi-generational longevity of their business or their dream or idea that they're creating, which is really a possibility. And I'm sure you have a lot to say on those things, but you know what I wanted to back up and ask you? When you said that you went back to Nigeria and began working with your dad, what did you love about working with your dad? Because I'm sure some people listening are like, oh my gosh, I couldn't imagine working for my parents or with my parents. But what told you that you were like, "Yes, I love this!"?

Nike Anani (08:11):

I mean, so for some context, when I left Nigeria at nine, it was just my mom and my brothers and I, and my dad would visit us. So growing up, I felt like I didn't know my dad. I would see him probably... He came once a month, once in two months, spent a week... But I felt like there was all this time to catch up on and all the while, whilst I was in the UK, I really didn't know. I didn't know that we had any common interests, any common passions. And here I am, coming back to Nigeria, and we have this common passion for, like, business, entrepreneurship, investing. And it was just a great way to get to know my father as an adult. And then I loved the flexibility of being a business owner. Like I didn't have to clock in at a specific time, you know? I didn't have to, there was none of that.

Nike Anani (09:05):

I service, um, as a woman as well. Um, I then got married, had two children and like, you know, life gets very interesting. Um, I just love that autonomy, that time freedom, um, that came with being a business owner. And I love the agency. I had to shape culture as a business owner, um, as a woman, for instance, be able to ensure that the culture of the organization ensures that there's flexibility. That it allows for other women to be able to rise up in the business. So for me, I really did enjoy working with my father. Um, 'cause maybe... 'Cause I didn't really know him that well compared to others that like, I would never do this. I would never work with that. Um, but all in all, it was a really, um, pleasurable, it was a great experience and I wouldn't trade it in for the world. I learned so much from him. He'd come with, like, all these years of experience. Like I said, he

started off the business the year I was born and I felt like he was, like, this wealth of wisdom. And it was just that I was just tapping from it directly from the source, as opposed to when it, when I was in corporate at Deloitte, I felt like I was getting the secondary source of like wisdom and knowledge, if that makes sense.

Liz Higgins (10:21):

Uh, yeah, it absolutely does. And that's, that's really cool to hear you expand on the context a little bit because in some ways it's like you are creating this whole new facet of a relationship with your, with your father when you went back and to kind of get to know each other on this more adult, um, eye to eye level than when you were so young and moved away. And so, yeah, I'm sure the situation probably feels very different for people that grew up with their family, very involved in their life for their whole upbringing versus those that have more distance in the relationship literally or geographically. So that's really cool to hear. And so, some of what you do or a lot of what you do in your speaking, your writing, your coaching is, is work with next gen, right? To create healthy working relationships and in family business and stuff... I mean, tell us some of the characteristics that you see about next gen and who they are in business and relationship.

Nike Anani (11:25):

So next gens are second gens or the generation earners, kids of founders, grandkids, or founders. And I think typically our millennials, gen Z is, but we see the world very differently from our parents, don't we? The luxury is we look through life as your reality, as your perspective, right? And our reality is very different. Um, a lot of the next gens that I meet have great ambitions to drive change in the family business. To make it future-focused, to also be, um, sticklers for good in both, in the family business and in society as well. But they usually face, um... Founders that find it difficult to let go, parents that feel like they've built this businesses over all these many years. And how can I... That group, in fact, I just came off a call with a gentleman that's, um, it's not quite our age, maybe double our age, but he's the next gen after all.

Nike Anani (12:31):

And he's having a hard time with his father who's in his eighties and refuses to retire. And as you can imagine, it can create a lot of tension between not just the next gen and the founder, but also then mum might be attracted to the picture. She might triangulate with all sorts of funny conflict. Siblings as well. Those who are working in the business that might not understand the commitment, the sacrifices that it takes to work in the business, or might not even understand the remuneration of those that are working in the business. They might just assume that therefore, they've got it easy, right? They're working with dad and, um, but the reality might be different from that.

Liz Higgins (13:15):

So with family business, you've got this confluence of family and business to significant institutions that are so different, so different, so different. And I just wonder, like, how does one even start to navigate conflict? I know this is part of what we're going to talk about today, but like... I'm even thinking of the client you just shared about like, wow, you know, the founder is nearing the end of his life, the, you know, the, the, the last phase, but is not ready to let go and to pull out or bow out and give that over. Um, where do you even begin to navigate those things when it's family?

Nike Anani (13:58):

Mm, I think at the heart of it is empathy. And empathy is hard work. It's hard work. Um, because a lot of the time, when we develop empathy for one another, we have to kind of suspend rationale. Our rational thinking and what's logic and what we deem as fact. But the truth is, we are emotional

beings that on occasion think as opposed to cognitive beings that have a vision. So a lot of decisions that are, that drive the founder, come from a place of fear and shame. Fear of mortality. I'm coming up to 85. I might go anytime now, but I had super grand dreams and ambitions in my heart that might not be disclosed to the next generation, even to their spouses. That typically type a personalities, just keep on going and going, uh beasting, and achieving, and achieving. And as they see that 'end day' is nearing, um, they get scared. And they, it makes it hard for them to let go, because they feel the need to hold on even tighter to achieve their goals.

Nike Anani (15:09):

Another fear they tend to have is a fear of loss of identity. Business is a baby. I know in our family, the business was the baby. All the love, the attention, the cat, like it was a sibling. That, you know, um, always my dad was just so focused on the business. And so if you're saying dad, when are you going to retire? All that his hearing is I'm losing, I'm losing my identity. I'm losing my status. I'm losing control. So once you start to develop deep empathy for where founders are and how they think, what's led them to where they are, it becomes a lot easier to be able to reframe your ideas in a way that's more palatable. In a way that's less likely to provoke, a way that's fair, in a way that's gonna make them more conducive towards your ideas. Like Stephen Curry says, "Seek first to understand, then to be understood."

Liz Higgins (16:15):

I think that's so huge. What, what you're talking about there, because coming from my own framework as a systems thinker, I'm very relationally based in the way that I work with clients. Even if I'm with one person it's like at the core of relationship, we have to be willing to wade into that deeper, um, often more emotional space where like you're saying the fears, the fear resides. The, the core issues that we hold really come out. And I think historically in some lines of thinking, it's like, you know, work and emotion are separated. But there's just, yeah, you're shaking your head. I feel the same. There's no way you can kind of compartmentalize that stuff. So you have to be able to move into that. And do you really, do you feel like you see that make a difference in how family members in business together navigate conflict and stuff?

Nike Anani (17:12):

For sure. I mean, um, even in a non-corporate, so in a non-family setting, in a corporate setting, emotions do have a huge influence, but when in a family setting, it becomes a bit more complicated because you have expectations and presuppositions as to who these loved ones are and what you expect of the way you should be treated. And, um, yeah, logic doesn't necessarily hold. So it's really important to kind of levitate and gain perspective. Firstly, over one's emotions. I know. I, I, yeah, I acted like it was the time of the month, many a time. Um, and threw plenty of tantrums, and resigned once or twice. Um, I'm not sure. Um, yeah. We've... Yeah. What might or might not be significant issues just depending on my mood, because I just got, so irate with certain things my father would do, or my brothers would do.

Nike Anani (18:13):

My mum would do. And you know, it's easier to use work as the battle ground, as an outlet, as the avenue to play out family dynamics, it's easier to fight about work. "Dad, you're not letting go dad. You're doing this mom. You're doing that." Rather than to go to the root, which is, "I feel you never cared about me because I felt abandoned by you all through my childhood because you were never there." But it takes deep introspection to get to that point, to understand that, what am I feeling, firstly? Why am I feeling this? Am I justified in feeling this now? What am I going to do about this? Um, and then equally to reflect on the other party's side - why they feel the way they feel. I started trying to understand the psychology of the time orientation, trying to understand the psychology of fear and shame. And if that's the case, if they're dealing with fear or shame, or

they're worried about their mortality, um, then does it help to nag? Does it help to criticize? Does it help to question? Are there any other ways we can kind of help them through this transition that they're going through? Because they're facing a huge transition as well.

Liz Higgins (19:42):

Right? Right. So you're kind of saying when you do the work of expanding how you are looking at the scenario, the dynamics playing out and what's coming up for you and there's a willingness to, like, go all in on that. You can really, you can really talk about it and explore it and come out stronger, rather than kind of wasting your time on the surface of whatever tensions are kind of playing out. You know?

Nike Anani (20:12):

Indeed, indeed. I mean, it goes both ways. By the way, it's not just... On the call I just came off, the person I spoke to was like, 'Why is it that all the advice is always about what next gen should do? Nothing tells, you know, no one says what founders should do.' And unfortunately the industry has been dominated by advisors by old white men serving old white men. No one thinks it's appropriate to serve next gen because they don't hold the check. Right? They're not the ones in power. So no one really addresses next gen traditionally. Um, everyone addresses the person that holds the check, and has the power, and the business. But firstly, it's wrong commercially. Second, it's wrong ethically. Um, thirdly, then... It then creates a narrative. Like there's something wrong with us as next gen. So we have to put in other work. And that's not true. There's a lot of work to be done on the part of the older generation as well. But that's fine.

Liz Higgins (21:12):

That's what I was going to ask you about too, because I think that that theme applies to working relationships, family, business, relationships, and even just partnership relationships. It's like one, one person has the awareness of like what you were saying coming into this, um, wanting to understand the psychology of shame and fear and emotional experiences wanting to understand yourself. Can you still make progress in the working relationships? If the one on the other end isn't as interested in the self-reflection or the going into that emotional space or whatever, like, do you still see clients make healthy shifts, healthy changes when they kind of feel like the work is one sided, that it's all on them?

Nike Anani (22:01):

Very good question! Yes. He can make progress if it's so any one way, if it's unilateral, if the, if it's on one person to do the work, because as you're doing the work you're changing the system, people are noticing, it's not just, um, no man is an island. You're not doing it. You know, in, in without context, right. As you're working on yourself, it does make an impact on the system. And you will notice changes in the founder, who would now be more receptive towards your ideas. Because the truth is a lot of the time as next gen it's, it's... When I moved back for instance, and I'd worked in corporate for a few years, I was, I was the critic. I had, like, a notepad with the list of things we needed to change. And I was constantly just kind of, like, nagging at my dad.

Nike Anani (22:53):

Like this needs to change. That needs to change. This is a change that needs to change, but it took me a long time that I had a, um, a questioning attitude as opposed to being an agent to ask questions. Um, sometimes you need to be the facilitator hold space and allow for others to arrive at conclusions themselves. Just allow for them ask questions that enable them to expand their thinking to take on a new perspective that they've never thought about the point isn't in arriving at the destination of the answer. The point is in, is in provoking and stimulating thought to consider

other alternatives to what we've been thinking. And yeah, so I think equally it works on both sides, right? The onus in an ideal world, we want bridge generations to be working themselves and working together. But if that's not possible, the next generation working on themselves alone, honestly, you would see significant shifts in the family system as well as in the business system.

Liz Higgins (23:57):

Yeah. I, I could not agree with you more and I, I get the sense that we're kind of kindred spirits in the sense of like our core mission is to help people learn to shift the way they're doing relationship. Now, maybe for me, that's within a marriage for you. It's within like the business, but like it's all kind of the same relational work and we are learning more and more about just how, how incredible those transformations can be. Even when you feel like you're the one that's willing to do the work. And nobody else is like, if you play the long game and allow yourself to be open, to change and growth, like stuff will grow around you.

Liz Higgins (24:38):

I want to ask you because I know you've shared, you're a mom too. And I know a lot of listeners are the millennial generation and we're having kids and we're having babies. And a lot of us waited later to do it, but it's happening. And I'm just wondering like... When you're, like, in your mid-thirties or even close to forties, and you're working in that family business or a high level position. And I think that this could be for moms and dads. Honestly, you have kids. How do you see that kind of shift the boundaries that people need to make with, with work and still feeling like they're a part of the mission and the business, but giving that time and dedication to parenthood that they want to have. I guess I'm wondering what you, what challenges do you see people have? And like what, what boundaries people have to explore at that point in their life?

Nike Anani (25:35):

Um, female business owners tend to have a lot of Imposter Syndrome. And the truth is, representation matters. Modeling matters. Um, for, for me, for instance, my mom was never active in the business. My mum was your traditional stay-at-home. Well, she worked, she works in Nigeria, as a matter of fact. When we moved to the UK, she was very part-time. It was very much about keeping the home and ensuring the kids are fine. And so when I was charting my path and forging my way, I didn't have a role model of a woman as a business owner. And there were many instances where I felt like I was out of where I was permitted to be. I was in many, a boardroom as the old, as the only woman and the youngest person in the room. And so many females struggle with this confidence and we have to get it and understand that it's a female thing.

Nike Anani (26:39):

Um, we, women, that's a gender confidence gap. Even when we are, as, as good as men, we tend to feel less confident. And so we read, um, indicators by our perception, indicators of confidence as, measures of confidence, as of competence, but you're right. Yeah. We read indicators of confidence as measures of competence. So we see a guy like speaking, very like either brash and really, you know, he's walking very tall and he seems very confident and we say, oh my God, he's so much better at this meet. I could never be that confident, but it's important to understand that this is our cycle. Another issue women tend to face. We haven't traditionally had support networks the way men have. I'm sure a member of young presidents organization, and it's an organization all around the world, the young seniors. And in my chapter, um, I would say 75% of the members are men.

Nike Anani (27:48):

And so, because we haven't had a support network that's so, social. Capital is so important in terms of the informal things you're learning when you go for a drink, 'cause you learn about learning. What about leadership tips? You learn about investment opportunities. You learn about it, you learn about so much. Right. Um, and so that's another challenge women are facing. And then as you kind of alluded to, we're juggling a lot. We're expected to be, you know, um, in as much as you know, there's a changing tide, isn't there, they're more ladies like myself and we're becoming more business or in a startup, business owners, we're investors and we're moms and we're wives... And we're this, we're that. But we kill ourselves doing it, or we have to have boundaries, right? And have to have full clarity as to, for me, I'm very much after many mistakes, many, I put my hands up and say, I wasn't, I'm not perfect at all.

Nike Anani (28:48):

I've made many a mistake as a young mom, young wife, um... Knowing in every season, what demands of me, what is the most important thing in the season? And then knowing the non-negotiables kind of areas. So I need to protect. That's what I say to myself. I need to protect my exercise time. I need to protect my quiet time. I need to protect certain things. And the non-negotiables in my diary. And I put in systems and structures to ensure that, you know, I have time for me to tend to me. So I have support. I have a nanny, I have cleaners, I have this, I have that. Sometimes I ask them, or my mom has come around to look after the kids or, um, my sister-in-law, um, just things like that. So as women, it's important, we're mindful of the responsibilities that we're carrying and we're really realistic with ourselves. That's what we can carry. And we've got the permission to say, no, we don't like to say no. I don't know why, but I really struggled with it for a long time. You know, someone would be like, oh, I really need to do this. Can you do it? And it's like on the inside, I'm like, no,

Speaker 3 (30:02):

No, no, I've got too much panic. Panic. Yeah. Sorry.

Nike Anani (30:06):

Yeah, yeah, yeah. On the inside.

Liz Higgins (30:11):

Yeah. And it's like the more extraneous stuff that you say yes to, at least for me, that's when I start chipping away at the time to just nurture me. Um, and you're right. I mean, we could probably do a whole other episode on why women say yes to everything, but it just feeds into this, um, kind of, 'overfunctioning' persona that we can take on, which probably a lot has to do with just those societal messages that we received as women. And I'm so glad that you are sharing some of these insights professionally, but personally, too, that you had to really be intentional about what are my non-negotiables, what are the things to get help with an outsource or whatever? Because I see women, millennial women continue to struggle with feeling like they've got to choose parenthood over career success, that they've got to choose these things one over the other.

Liz Higgins (31:07):

And I think that, like you said, the tides are turning and I so badly want to believe that we can do it all. But the reality is that there's gotta be systemic change because we can't do it all alone. We never should have, and we shouldn't going forward, but it's really restructuring, like supporting female led businesses and what do they need? And it is different than what men have been

privileged to have for all this time. So it's an exciting time, but I feel like we're still in the growing pains of figuring it all out.

Nike Anani (31:43):

I completely completely agree. And, um, we can have it all, but it can't be the cost of our mental health as well. Right. We must be cognizant of that.

Liz Higgins (31:54):

How can a person know when they're kind of reaching that precipice of like you are doing so much and you're inching towards burnout or right there, you know, into like mental health issues, emotional health issues, what would tell a person like it's too much?

Nike Anani (32:12):

So me personally, um, my husband's a great barometer who will often be like, you know, you're not eating well, you're not sleeping. Well, you seem on the edge. You're constantly just, you know, you're not concentrating, you're present, but you're not present. Um, you're not really taking what I'm saying in like, you could see, like, your eyes are just like that, but you're thinking about the 8,000 other "tops" in your brain. Right?

Liz Higgins (32:36):

Um, and I'm smiling because I'm pretty sure my husband told me that the other day he's, he's always like, I see you, but you're not here. Yeah.

Nike Anani (32:44):

You're, you're gone. You're in another world, but you're like planning world domination. Um, I think for me, it's um, so people around me are really helpful. It's kind of saying to me and remind me, like, you're kind of very off, come back. Um, for me, I tend to have racing thoughts. Um, I tend to start to get very dark in my thoughts. So I'm not able to be see positives in people and situations. I start to be very negative, extremely negative. I feel like life is arduous. Um, I don't want to be in contact with anyone. I don't want to do the things that usually give me joy and pleasure. Um, and yeah, it's just, I've had a couple of seasons in my life like that that were true. Good. Not only by, you know, workaholic, you know, type tendencies, but you should be honest. The workaholism was triggered by trauma, traumatic incidents.

Nike Anani (33:51):

Um, so either intense grief. So I lost a few family members. Like back-to-back-to-back so sorry. Yes. And, or just, yeah, just, yeah, really tough seasons would usually be the trigger for that. But at the time I don't recognize that, um, I'm not coping with the situation. I feel strong. I feel resilient. I feel like a business owner that is, you know, doing all the things and I'm, beasting through it. And then two, three weeks, then I, then I feel it in my body. I feel the emotions in my body. Um, I feel it in my heart. I feel it in my head, I have this constant headache, um, just a dreadful life for me. That's personally when I realized like, okay, something's gotta give like self-compassion time.

Liz Higgins (34:49):

Oh yeah, absolutely. Self-compassion so such a good practice to have. And I love that. You're kind of going through these specifics for yourself and people listening. I'm sure. It's like, when you let yourself listen to your body, it will tell you, we got to learn to trust our bodies because we will start to feel certain things and we're off and we're foggy. We're racy thoughts. It can be unique from person to person. It is. But to know what that looks like, feels like such a helpful thing. And I love hearing you say that even your relationship is a barometer to help you be in tune with

yourself. It does make me want to ask because you are being so open, like how has being in this realm impacted your marriage? Because you said that you also do some work with your spouse as well.

Nike Anani (35:41):

You know? Well, um, we've done quite well, honestly, with navigating the complexity of fussy. I'm I have a lot of responsibility of my family business. Like I kind of alluded to, so there were times where I was flying traveling three times a month, four times a month. Wow. Yeah. My husband was in corporate when we first met and then three years ago he left and we set up the business together. I think by and large we've, we've dealt quite well with it, but we, we, we communicate really well. We are very open and clear on what are we, what's important. So that's your boss. What's going on with you in the season. Now I should be aware of, and I should, you know, should be priority to me and vice versa. We always kind of, I didn't like speaking about money when we first met, I found it really awkward. Um, I remember the first time we had to have a conversation, like what you are. And for me that was, that was for quite, because the last relationship I've been in the frog was dating me for money. So it was like, yeah. So it was really like tender.

Liz Higgins (36:57):

Yeah, like you felt your guard up a little bit. It's like, okay, I'm walking into this necessary conversation again, but I know how this one before, so what's going to happen.

Nike Anani (37:07):

And even though I knew my husband was trusted, you know, trustworthy and we were going to get married, I still kind of felt really awkward about it. But he was really good with being patient with me to talk it all out. And then honestly, we're very open with our finances and we're open with what's priority for me, what's priority for you? What did we join? You need to plan because as business owners, um, yeah, the finance part can be interesting. 'Cause you can have a month of great sales and great profits. And then the next month it's like loud, why are we doing this again? Like where's the next check going to come from? And it could cause a lot of anxiety, right? And if you have different priorities, like saving investing habits, say for instance, or risk appetites, let's put all our money and buy more stock for the business. Whereas someone who's like, 'let's keep all the money in the bank.'

Liz Higgins (38:02):

Well, yeah. And that's a very relevant conversation. I think just with everything happening in the cryptocurrency realm, I mean, people are just jumping into these opportunities, but I I'm just, I think that would be such an interesting conversation to have for people that are in the dating phases of life. And then like in the early years of marriage, how they're navigating those things. Because this stuff is all, it's just happening right now in our world. And you're bringing up such a good point like for you and your husband, you've been really good about communicating. And then it's like all the different things there are to communicate about. You have to have this level of transparency to at least understand each other's framework, you know?

Nike Anani (38:48):

And that's not necessarily to say that you, you have identical views on things or risk appetites were very different. We are very different. I'm very risk averse, he's moderate risk taker. So it doesn't take much for me to be like what's going on. Um, but the point is we communicate about it and we are able to then actually compliment each other. So it's great to take risks. It's also great to diversify risk. And so it's important to have those communications and avenues where you can firstly allow for safety to be different from one another and talk about money and wealth because

it's important. Um, we think conditioned the society, not to talk about money, not to talk about wealth. We've also been conditioned and this one's a tricky one with women, especially we've been conditioned to shameless. We've been conditioned to think aspiring to be successful is being greedy, being evil. Um, and quite a lot of the time we, we can be self-sabotaging to stay small, particularly as women because we don't want to outshine our spouses because we're supposed to be the dose on that will help her on the side saying seen when we're ready to be seen and spoke, speak. When we have permission to speak, I'm like feeling my

Liz Higgins (40:17):

I'm like, no, we're so past that, but no, I mean, it's so real for so many people. And I have to be aware of myself to just have the, the privileged space that I'm in... Because I've done coaching programs to help me build confidence in my business personality and my leadership and stuff. These are things that are not yet ingrained in the system of how we are just raising the next generation, the, you know, our culture society. So I'm very glad that you're touching on these pieces because they're very important.

Nike Anani (40:53):

Really important. And it's just to be aware of them and you know, just counter them if that's, if those are your values fine, that's fine. But I think the worst thing is to be operating by someone's rule book that you didn't consent to explicitly. Right. And you're just playing the, you know, playing the role of something that's not congruent with who you truly are here at the essence of your being. And if that's the case, that'd be very clear with your values, your aspirations, your goals, and going for that 100%.

Liz Higgins (41:26):

Yeah. I couldn't agree more. There's kind of this movement out there that I see a lot of stuff on social media for it's about like having conscious relationships. And I feel like that's exactly what you're speaking to. It's like decide what your values are, but be firm on those beliefs and really be intentional about how you're living that out and what it looks like in personal and in working relationship. This has been such a great conversation and I want to hear like how well, how can people find you for sure. If they want to like, learn more about you and get in touch with you and kind of curious, like where do you come in to assist people? Like at what stage in their business or life do you typically work with people at?

Nike Anani (42:18):

Um, you can find me on my website, nikeanani.com. That's N I K E A N A N i.com. All the information is there, my social, email and what have you. Um, it depends, this is a question. So a lot of my engagements fall into three buckets. So I do one-on-one consulting with, um, either next gen or a lot of the time, you know, who we're talking about - female, first-generation business owners who are struggling with a lot of mindset issues. Um, so this is one of, one piece. I also do next gens in like the whole, all siblings, helping them with forming teams and partnerships because they will be the next generation of earners and or leaders of businesses and, um, forming a team, a partnership it's not, it's not by osmosis. It takes practice and intentionality. And so I come and help with facilitating what's our common purpose or common vision.

Nike Anani (43:22):

Our, um, what's the compelling reason for us to stay in business together? Because we could all go our separate ways. Right, right. Um, but we need that, too, and that bond to keep us together. So I come in now and also I help with building bridges between, um, the whole family. So the older generation and the next generation often, like I was alluding to there's a gap and that really stops

the succession process. So I help with helping the older gents to move from pastas to mentors and helping the next generations be able to communicate their ideas in a way that there'll be hard. So it depends. The point is that it's not nice and tidy. Um, it depends as every family businesses unique everyone's circumstances to meet. So the difference, I think

Liz Higgins (44:08):

That's amazing because it's, it sounds like you can meet people exactly where they are and help them kind of get the leverage. They need to shift into growth and changing those relationships, however they need to. But I hear a real path to like self-empowerment in wherever they are in their journey. Um, so thank you so much for sharing about this and to people listening to this episode, we will definitely have links to, um, Nike's resources and her website in the Show Notes. Thank you again. This was really great. I so appreciate you doing this. Thank you.

Thanks again for listening to the podcast. If you like the show, leave us five stars or write a review. If you're interested in learning more, sign up for my free ebook "The One Barrier to Commitment All Millennials Face" at millennialrelationships.com.

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