

Ep #1: When Will You Master Yourself?



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With Your Hosts

Radiah Rhodes, Dr. Roni Ellington & Tawana Bhagwat

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This is a real conversation with women about self-mastery. The most powerful method of turning seemingly abstract concepts, like being and intention into visible and measurable realities. Join engineers, strategists, and transformational thought leaders, Tawana Bhagwat, Radiah Rhodes, and Dr. Roni Ellington to accelerate your results, make significant change, and achieve your most stretching goals without snapping in the process. Welcome to the Power Paradigm.

Radiah: Hello and welcome to the Power Paradigm podcast. I'm one of your hosts, Radiah Rhodes. I'm here with our full team, Dr. Roni Ellington and Tawana Bhagwat. And on this episode, we are laying the foundation by talking about self-mastery. Because we are ambitious women, we are always mastering many things. How many credentials and skills do you have on your resumé? What are your strengths? What's your zone of genius? What's your Myers Briggs?

All the different assessments, you know what your strengths are. What books are you reading right now to try and master the next level? We're all life-long learners and we implement. So we are constantly absorbing, practicing, and mastering things at will. But the question is when will you master you?

So we want you to listen to this episode with an open mind and an open heart towards your ability to master you. Each part of you. Not just the facets of you that achieve and serve, but also the facets that struggle and that won't stop sacrificing your health or settling for a life you know is less than you desire or deserve.

So hear this episode as a way through. One of my guiding mantras in life is there's always a way through. So listen to this as an option on how you can integrate these different facets and feel whole and experience your life from a place of mastery. So we're going to get started and we're going to start out by just saying what is self-mastery. So Tawana, Roni, what you got?

Tawana: So I think of self-mastery as many elements of it. And the first thing that comes to mind for me is really around it's a journey. And in

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entering a journey, there is levels of achievement, of moving through, and we were having a discussion before and I mentioned that self-mastery is about being in control of your internal thoughts, emotions, feelings, behaviors that really guide you through how you respond versus react to external stimuli.

And so as I was just working through that for myself, and we use this word control loosely. One of the things in trying to distinguish between responding and reacting, where a response is something that is done with intention and awareness. And this reaction shows up really as a feeling that you're emoting from your body. You feel it all through your inner being.

And sometimes, you don't know where it's coming from or what's the reason that's driving it. So your reaction could come across as hazardous, reckless, it could come across as genuine, it could come across as others may feel it offensive, but it could actually be this genuine space that you're in that you don't know what to do with.

So as I was pondering this self-mastery, I was really thinking about how do I become more aware of my emotions, feelings, thoughts, and behaviors, and the way that I'm responding, but being genuine in my reaction to something. That was long-winded but that was really me just thinking through what will help me to be on this journey and how Roni said it best yesterday. Present. I need to be to my intention. And where I am in the space that I'm in.

Roni: So yeah, my fundamental perspective on self-mastery starts with self-awareness and presence. You cannot master something that you're not aware of. And so when you become fully aware, you really live in your body at the moment and you start to notice your inner and outer experience, like the inner world and then the outer happenings.

And then to me, what's important in self-mastery, just to add is this idea of who are you, what are you up to, and what game are you playing? So you're mastering a self inside of what you're committed to, what you're up to, not just arbitrarily. So my goal is who I am is a loving presence for the

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world, and what I'm up to is having people realize their truth or realize whatever, and then I'm playing a game called connecting with those.

So if somebody comes up and they start - whatever they do, and if that's who I am and what I'm up to, the response I give will be inside of that. But if I'm saying what I'm up to is I don't care and you get out of my face, then it could be authentic self-mastery to say well, I'm not interested in dealing with that and I'm going to move on my way.

So part of the self-mastery is inside of declaring who you are, what you're up to, what game you're playing, and then responding in kind to forward that game. I remember I was in a transformational program and they would always say when we would talk, they say was that conversation forwarding the action? If what you have to say is not forwarding something, what's the point?

Radiah: Good question.

Roni: They would ask us that all the time. So people would go to the mic and we've done this work and people would share, but the point is is this forwarding something? And if it ain't, then it's just like you're just talking. And so that's how I kind of always manage myself when I'm about to go on a rampage, or sometimes I'll tell people, look, this is a tirade and what I'm up to is just expressing.

So people are aware of what I'm up to, so that's a big piece of it for me too is really what am I forwarding. When I speak, when I show up, when I listen, where am I listening from? That's another thing to ask you. When you listen to people, you can listen from I'm about to talk or you can listen from let me listen to what's the goal there, what the commitment is there.

So all of these things to me is a part of self-mastery. Being so present to you, your experience, who you are, your impact. And as I'm saying this, I'm like, that's a lot to be looking at, but the better you get at it, the more it just becomes a part of the whole experience in the moment.

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So it's not something in the beginning it can be kind of challenging because you're like, oh shucks, I'm feeling this, they're doing that, oh my god. But then as you get masterful at it, you really start to go okay, so that's what I have to say.

Radiah: Yeah, I see similar - I see self-mastery as kind of the zone. So there's practice and there's evaluation and awareness and presence that on that journey, Tawana, as you mentioned, you are uncovering and you're discovering and learning. And as you practice presence, as you practice responding versus reacting, as you practice that active listening as opposed to listening with the intent to respond, as you practice and build mastery in those ways of being and those ways of showing up, you can get into a space where there's a zone, where in the moment, you have an arsenal of techniques to pull from. Just like an elite athlete who practices every day.

Kobe Bryant, I think he would choose one skill a year or a season to focus on. And by x number of seasons, he had a whole list of skills that he had mastered. So I think of self-mastery in the same way. As we do our work, we know it's a quarterly process that we define. Who are we, what are we up to, and what game are we playing.

And inside of that, we get to practice these different aspects of self-mastery. And then before you know it, in the moment, you can pull on a multitude of techniques to deal with any situation. And the point of that is for me, the point is to move out of surviving. It's to live a life where I am truly thriving because life is going to come at us.

Things are going to happen, unexpected things are going to pop up, people are going to get on our nerves, we're going to want to snap, we're going to stretch towards something that's going to require us to become bigger, newer, whatever than what we've been. And inside of that commitment, like you said, Roni, because the point is not to just be arbitrary.

I have a definition for self-mastery that says self-mastery is often defined as self-control. The ability to exert a strong will against our impulses to steer

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our future to one of our choosing. So there's some components in there about being able to have self-control and to be able to self-manage, self-regulate, different words people use for it.

But then there is the piece to steer our future into one of our choosing. And that is the goal. That is what is it all for? What are you committed to? And so whatever comes up, you have a place of grounding that you can come from in terms of what the goal is and what you're committed to, and so then how do you want to show up to your point, to forward the action?

So it's a powerful way to live. It's not just another tool from the perspective of a skill you're going to learn. There are many skills you will learn to support self-mastery, but I believe it's the ultimate place of being and showing up that allows you in any situation to be unshakable, to be unfadeable. So I'm about that self-mastery life.

Roni: Yeah, well some days I am and some days I'm not.

Radiah: Real talk.

Roni: Take it from my girl, Couture. I ain't always waving the flag for. What she defines, which I think is powerful. I love her. Hey Couture. She would say - Eya Couture, let me be clear, she's a priestess. But she would say things like people want the results of self-mastery, but the who you got to be is something people want to kind of skip past and that's why people want strategies.

And she always would say, I don't have a strategy for anything. She said the strategy comes from the way of being and how you want to show up. And she was like, I ain't always waving the flag for it because you really have to be real grown to be self-masterful. Grown. You have to be grown. If you ain't willing to be grown, because I know there's part of me that want to tantrum and carry on and be a victim and blame. Self-mastery is none of that. You own 100% of your choices, you own how you show up, you own the result, even if you don't think it's you.

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Tawana: Real quick, Roni, to that point, and I think it's brilliant because we just went on three different philosophical perspectives on what self-mastery is and definitions and all that, and I think you just said it in it's 100% ownership of you. It's you taking 100% responsibility.

You can call that being grown, you can call it whatever you want to call it, but that's really all it is. That in any moment, the realization, the understanding, the ownership that whatever is occurring is 100% created by you. So when your man is doing what he does, when your children are children.

Roni: Man thing though, why you got to do that? Why you had to go there though?

Radiah: I'm just saying, that's what most of us out here are dealing with.

Roni: I ain't grown there. It was his fault. Anyway, go ahead. I'm sorry.

Radiah: Listen, whether it's you and the cookies or your man and his craziness or the children being children, you know, or the momma doing the momma, whatever it is, your life is 100% what you are creating because they are just doing what they do. I say all the time, people are going to people. People are going to people.

Roni: There's going to be a video because then y'all can see my face out in podcast land. Because it's elements. Yeah, she's right but I'm just like - part of me...

Radiah: When you get that really what you're living in is the story you're telling about people peopling, I want you to get that. You're telling a story. So when Roni goes on a tirade, I'm going to tell a whole story about it. Well, there she goes, acting out. I don't know. I make it up.

And then when my husband says something crazy, I'm going to be like, see, there he goes. That's my story. I created a whole world around it when all Roni did was say whatever she said. That's all that happened. But then I had a story about it that then caused me a whole reaction inside, like

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Tawana talked about. The beliefs, the thoughts, the emotions, the feelings, and the behaviors.

But when you have self-mastery, you can really distinguish what people do and say and how they show up for just being what people do and say and how they show up.

Roni: And you know Radiah, I can't lead this conversation without addressing this thing that people are all up in arms about and it's all about my boundaries. So I've seen a whole lot of people - okay, let me tell you my issue with this boundary's conversation.

So particularly women are having problems and troubles with people. So people are doing people stuff and they do what they do and it has an impact. And so everybody's like, I just need to up my boundaries and I ain't got no boundaries and so notice how it's being framed. That somehow, people doing them is impacting you and now your response is just boundaries.

Now, I'm not saying that's not a decent response, but think about it. It's at the effect of them. So you got to put something up to address somebody else. What if you could be boundary-less and still be powerful? So that it ain't even about the boundary. It's about how you address people doing what they do. You understand the difference?

So boundaries implies my boundaries and I'm going to cut them off. We're quick to cut somebody off, be some boundary, do all these things that protects us, but what if we actually could be powerful no matter what? And so I'm not saying you wouldn't have preferences, requirements, but that language is not this I got boundaries and that's the problem.

Well yeah, but I don't know, I just have this thing about - that's about then protecting. Not necessarily mastery, in my opinion. That if you can master you as people do what they do, the boundary will naturally be set because when there's time for you to leave, you'll leave. When you have to engage,

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you will. You'll know how to engage with people without this forcing I got to put up my boundaries, you got to be cut off. Anyway, I hate to say that.

Radiah: Here's the thing with that, Roni. Because it's right on. It takes a certain amount of energy to have to protect and be on alert. When you put up boundaries, you define what's within just as much as you keep something out. So there's an impact on your even of your own boundaries.

So here's the deal; to your point, I love this idea of just considering that there's more than one response to people doing whatever they do that impacts you in a way that you don't want to be impacted. The one response yes, is putting up boundaries. Other responses, you could transform the whole situation. You could choose to engage fully and actually be a contribution and make a difference in the whole situation.

Here's what I think is a barrier to that. Beyond this conversation of self-mastery, I think that encompasses the whole thing where you're on this journey, you're practicing, you're building this mastery that allows you to open up to that. But most of us are here surviving.

And when you're surviving, everything feels like a threat, or many things feel like a threat. So the natural response in that situation is to protect and put up boundaries. So all that means from my perspective is that if your answer - again, there are of course situations where the boundary is the right thing. We talk about this all the time.

There's a difference between threat and danger and fear. You can be afraid of something, you can be uncomfortable about something, and there are many responses open to you, and then there are situations where there's a real threat and there's danger and the right response is a boundary. Like stop it, cut it, to protect yourself because that is appropriate for what's happening.

But when you become present and you can really look at is there a danger here or am I just feeling uncomfortable or just afraid, and in that moment when you answer that question, then you know, do I need to put up a

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boundary and/or is this something that I can actually engage in from a place of mastery that can change the whole game on it.

Roni: Yeah. This reminds me of a story that I used to go to this church called OGOT and Reverend Anne was the minister. Bless her soul. She's deceased but she was awesome. She shared this story, it stuck with me ever since she shared it.

So she wasn't really having a self-mastery conversation but she was just having a conversation about what love can transform. So she was having this conversation and she shared this experience. And this is to me a representation of mastery in its finest. So she was walking home from somewhere. She was single, she was by herself, she was walking in the dark.

Someone came up to her with a gun and was trying to rob her. And she's a minister, very well practiced, phenomenal person. She said, in that moment, I had a choice. She said, I could be afraid, up in arms, all of that. She said, I didn't. She said, in that moment, I stopped and I said this is my brother. Now, this is a high level. I don't know if I could do this.

But in the spirit of her spirit, when she shared this, we were all aghast. She said I could have been fearful and then I could have ignited his fear, but I wasn't committed to that. She said, because who I am is love so in that moment, I started to think this is my brother and I love him. This is my brother and I love him, or something of that effect. I don't remember what she said.

Do you know, the brother literally put his gun in his pocket and walked away because of how she was showing up. It was danger. I get it. Now, I'm not saying I would have done that. When she shared the story - but it was powerful because she was like, if I say god is love and I say that's who I'm about, she said, I can be that in the face of this.

So she had a choice and she made that choice, and it was something that god couldn't even continue the robbing or whatever he was trying to do. He

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literally put his gun and walked away, and she went in her car or in her house and left. Now again, there was a danger there. She knew that if she'd had been fearful, all she would have done was excite his fear and it would have been back and forth.

Because at the time, there was a gun, there was a guy. You know what I'm saying? What else would there be? You get up in arms. But anyway, when she shared that story, it so represented a presence, being aware of the choice she had, and making a choice in who she knew herself to be, which was a minister of god who was about loving her brother no matter what.

Radiah: There's so many things in that, Roni. There's a couple things. So one is I would not have been able to do that. And I'm actually pretty even when it comes to - I got a superpower. However though, when it does speak to when you know who you are and you know what you're up to and you know what game you're playing, because she knew who she was as a representative of god, a vessel of god, in her faith she knows what she's up to in terms of showing up in love and what game she was playing.

So given that, the willingness in the face of that to still embody who she says she is because a lot of us are out here on the regular saying it's who I am, and that's a whole 'nother story we'll talk about another time. Declaring who you are. But then the minute something shows up outside of what's comfortable for you, you ain't that no more. You're not the loving, compassionate, committed, whomever.

So for her to show up consistent and authentically and aligned inside of who she's defined herself or declared herself to be in the face of that kind of threat is tremendous.

Roni: It was tremendous. That's why I remembered it. I was like, Reverend Anne. Now, this was me - maybe it was about 12 years ago, so I wasn't even a practitioner at the time. I was just going to church. I was not where I am spiritually now, and I couldn't even do it now.

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But she was - when she shared the story, everybody - and I can see that it's possible that you can show up so in love, so with a shield, so like, this is who I am. And she even said, if I was going to go out that day, then I would have went out in love because that's what I stood for.

Radiah: And that's powerful because it's even if you can't see yourself there, you know and can see that that's the truth. That that story, that that occurrence is the truth of who we can be. It's the truth of who she was in that moment.

Roni: And it wasn't a put on. It wasn't a - it was she believed it, there was a set of beliefs about how she felt about her. I mean, I'm capturing Reverend Anne in this little piece but it was a whole way of being about her that I could totally believe it. Like yes, that's how she saw herself. Like no kidding.

Radiah: And that applies to anything, right? It applies to whether that's parenting, I know Roni, that's one of your superpowers, but that ability shows up consistent with who you declare yourself to be inside of whatever is happening can apply anywhere. It can apply with you in your health, it can apply with you in your parenting. You and your relationships, your marriage, or partnerships.

Roni: Why you got to go to relationships again? Don't you know I'm in a relationship struggle right now?

Radiah: Clearly y'all, we're going to have an episode about relationships. I have a feeling that's coming up next. So let's wrap up this conversation about self-mastery. There are three things that I love about self-mastery and I think we've talked about some of those things here.

So one is the ability to stop striving. When you master yourself and we talked about being in the moment and having an arsenal of tools and techniques that you can actually pull from just in the moment when you're present. Because we believe that people have an innate ability to know what is to be done or said in any moment, in any situation.

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It's just that much of the time, we're often coming from a past or reacting to something, as Roni would say. Literally reenacting something from the past in the present moment and bringing that baggage into the present moment. And so we don't always see how in any moment, if we are clear, if we are present, we actually will know what there is to say or do, if anything.

And so inside of self-mastery, there's no need to strive. There's a presence, there's a knowing of what's around you and that you're capable in any moment and there's an assurance that you can show up and that you can handle whatever you're facing.

So for me, one is you can stop striving. Two is self-mastery is strategic. Anything that you want to accomplish, if you think about battles and things like that, people always go to the source. To the head. So we talked about self-mastery really being in the simplest form, it's 100% you. That you are the 100% creator of whatever you're experiencing and whatever you're encountering.

Because really, what you're living into is the story you're telling about what's happening because what's happening is just what's happening. And given that, if you - we do all the things. We take all the classes, we read all the books, we get all the different - the business thing, the health thing, all the different support, which is good so long as we know that we're still the 100% responsible source in this situation.

Not because we're going to go to those external things and actually get the result from that because it's still us. We always say - I ask people all the time, well, what's the barrier? What's in the way right now? And 99% of the people say oh, well if I could just get out of my own way.

Well, if it is about you 99% of the time, then why not put the focus and investment in mastering you as opposed to all these external skills and things we try to master to solve whatever issues or reach whatever goals?

So self-mastery is strategic. And the last piece about it is is this sustainable because you are evolving but your focus is on the evolution and the growth

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and the mastery of you. You will always be with whatever's happening and be on the pulse and be taking care of whatever growth is needed for whatever you're encountering.

So in the case of I want to lose weight and I try x, y, z diet, I try x, y, z exercise program, it lasts for a minute and then it's done. And that's the cycle of life. The cycle of life is that things are going to ebb and flow. Things are going to progress and then regress. But in the case of self-mastery, the focus is always just on who you are and where you are.

So even when that diet stops working, because your focus is on you and not the diet, you'll know that there's an adjustment to be made. You'll know that there's something else to look at or it's starting to falter, and you can start to shift along with it. So that experience of start and stop and getting two steps ahead and three steps back, that kind of goes away.

And I know I used to call you all the time like, Roni, I thought I got through this already. Why do I feel like I'm back here again? And it's because I was looking for these external solutions to solve it and be done with it. And you're never really done and so for me, self-mastery is the acceptance and the ownership that you're never done and it's just really just you to deal with. Not these extra things. Unless you choose to use them and they're serving...

Roni: You are done. I'm going to tell you when you're done, y'all. You done at Denny's and that's my thing. When they go on to the little - and you in the box or in the urn and people are going - that's when you're done. So until then, there is a journey of self-mastery that we're all on and even when it feels like you have some stuff you put up before, maybe you're getting to the crevice now.

So you might have - it doesn't undo the mastery before when you master more. So Kobe Bryant didn't just stop when he got good. He kept mastering. So it might have been this much percent from him and 100, but he spent his time on that percent. That's what masters do. So yeah, I'll tell you when it's done.

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I used to believe like, oh god, I can just check the box. Relationships, handled. I've still not checked that box. But anyway. Yeah Radiah, you nailed it.

Radiah: So I think that's all we have. I mean, this is just the beginning. This is just the foundation. Self-mastery is our jam. That is what Evók is about. That's what we are about and how we actually move through life. It's a way of living. It's not just something that we do. But it's who we are and how we evolve and grow and embody this power paradigm that we talk about.

So thank you for joining us. Thank you for listening to this episode. There's more to come, and just know that everything that we speak about, no matter what the topic is is inside of this conversation of self-mastery because we are always here being with ourselves so that we can be with others and be with the world.

So thank you again for listening. Thank you for joining. Please subscribe, leave us a review, let us know what you want to hear about. We love to talk about all things power.

Roni: We're going to talk about relationships, y'all.

Radiah: It's coming.

Roni: That's a whole situation. And romantic relationships in particular. So there's relationships, and then there's romantic relationships. Stay tuned because that's a whole 'nother level of mastery, you hear me?

Radiah: Very well. So thank you all, have a great one. Love, light, and power.

Roni: Alright, see you all next time.

Thank you for listening to the Power Paradigm. If you love what you've heard today and want more, come visit us at evoklife.com.