

UNCONDITIONALLY WORTHY

The Podcast

Unconditionally Worthy Podcast EP #55: How to Step Into Your Power with Ekene Onu

Dr. Adia Gooden: (00:00:00) This episode is sponsored by Crys & Tiana, taking the guesswork out of launching your podcast.

Dr. Adia Gooden: Welcome to the Unconditionally Worthy podcast. In this podcast I will guide you on your journey to connect with the true source of your self worth. Each week we'll discuss barriers to unconditional self worth, the connection between self worth and relationships, self worth practices you can apply to your life, and how to use self worth as a foundation for living courageously.

I'm your host, Dr. Adia Gooden, a licensed clinical psychologist, dance enthusiast, and a dark chocolate lover who believes deeply that you are worthy unconditionally.

Welcome to another episode of the Unconditionally Worthy podcast. I'm excited and happy and grateful as always having you here and listening and we have an amazing episode for you today. I am talking with Ekene and she is the head of an organization that's focused on iconic womanhood. Ekene Onu is she's just a powerful person, you know, when you meet someone, and they're just sort of easing with wisdom and grace? Well, I've only met her virtually. And that is how I felt. She shares so much insight and wisdom. She talks honestly about her own journey. She talks about what iconic womanhood means to her. And it's really powerful and how I think it we also think and talk about how you step into the power of womanhood, the power of femininity, and some of the challenges that you may experience along the way, as well as ways to overcome them to get in touch with yourself to live in a authentic life.

So this is just an incredible conversation, I know that I feel really honored to have been able to talk with Ekene and learn from her because she really is a wonderful teacher. So I want you to tune in, you're going to really hear a lot that is going to uplift you and inspire you. And I think going to make you rethink how you can claim the power of the femininity that you have in you. So tune in and listen and know that this isn't just an episode for women, right? Certainly, we sent her women in this episode. And if you're not a woman, I think you'll also gain a lot from it. So let's get into it.

So I'm very happy to welcome Ekene on the podcast today. She is a mindset and transformational coach, and an expert on feminine leadership and power. And following a career of two decades in the world of pharmacy, she reinvented herself and underwent a personal wellness revolution to reclaim her feminine power and choose to create a life of passion and purpose. To begin a career as a transformational coach she received her training from several notable institutions such as Georgetown University, and the Institute of Social and Emotional Intelligence.

Today, she is the Chief Principal of Refresh with Ekene LLC, a coaching and consulting company and the founder of the Iconic Womanhood brand. Through these she has built a community of intentional women who live soulful and purposeful lives. She also leads workshops and retreats globally, and has been featured in various media publications for television and magazines in both the U.S. and Nigeria.

So Ekene I'm so excited to have you on the podcast. Welcome.

Ekene Onu: Thank you for having me. I so appreciate that. And I love the name of your podcast Unconditionally Worthy. So thank you for having me here. I appreciate.

Dr. Adia Gooden: Thank you. Thank you. Well, I'd love to start our conversation the way I always start conversations with guests on the podcast, which is by asking you to share a bit about your own self worth journey.

Ekene Onu: It's great question. I think that's a journey that we're always on. Right? I think it's until the day we we leave this earth. We are becoming aware of who we are, aware of our value and our worth. And then that gives us the impetus and the energy to do more and more of God's work on this earth. So my, I would say, I was born in the U.S. but I left the U.S. when I was about seven and moved back to Nigeria and that's where my formative years was spent. And so I have a very informed by culture, our traditions. We are experiencing life and you know, (00:05:00) I was a good Nigerian girl. I am the firstborn, I am the first daughter and [Inaudible] [00:05:06] and in our culture, they call first daughters Ada and the Ada that title comes with a lot of responsibility. And the responsibility, and it's sort of a way we look at women to, is this idea that in order for you to be good, or worthy, or valuable, it is really about you doing for everyone else. So Ada especially I heard this all through my life, you know, you are Ada, you know, if you are sad, come on what are your younger ones going to say.

You just get up, you know, come to the kitchen, everybody else is playing. And I want to play too, because I'm a kid. But no, you know, you're the Ada you're only eight years old. But it's your

job to come and do the work. And so over time you learn through that programming that your value is in your service to others and your value isn't about how other people think you are adding to them. Right, and you learn to put your needs, your desires, your hopes, and even your self image on the back-burner and look to others to define that for you.

And I remember when I came back to the U.S. I was 16 really first time ever, and it's only recently that I started to really process, the, while it was a wonderful, my parents were trying to do the best they could for me, right? They sent me here for college. We graduate college a lot younger. My parents lived in Nigeria. My whole family lived there. I came alone. And that was that, was what people did, right? Usual, I had a lot of friends. In fact, it was a privilege to be able to go abroad your university education. And, but I don't, I never really thought about the trauma that was associated with that, because now I am the mother of six, my last 16. And I just look at this baby, right. And I'm like, I can't even imagine her going off to another country that she has never, I mean, I was born here, but I had very few memories. Remembered peanut butter, right? I had very few memories, like, you know, the Whopper, but all my memories food centric anyway. But that's good. But you come and it was so foreign to me. I was 16. I was a baby.

Dr. Adia Gooden: Yeah.

Ekene Onu: And you're trying to then also figure out who you are. As now you're now adding other things to the mix. Right? So first you are girl. You're trying to figure out yourself as a girl, and then you're an evil girl. And then now you come to the U.S. where you discover you're black. Right? And then what that means for this culture, right? And not just that you're black, you're still Black and African. So there's a secondary layer. So you're dealing with people who look at you strange, because you're African who are black, like you too, by the way, and white are saying, but then you're dealing with this other race layer, and you're still trying to navigate trying to get through school. And I grew up Nigerians are known for being education focused, right.

And we are, you know, so I grew up in a community, everyone around me, [Inaudible] [00:08:32] wants to go to the Ivy League and you know, academic, you know, excellence was very important to us. And we use that to measure ourselves again, as far as worth. And in fact, when I decided to study pharmacy wasn't even so much that I decided to study pharmacy, I wanted to study creative writing. But, and this funny, let me tell you, my mom, so my mom had, my mom when I had a conversation with her about what I wanted to study. She said, no, you cannot. You can either be a doctor, you can be a lawyer, you can be an engineer, or you can be a pharmacist, pick one. Right. And I was recently having, I've told this story multiple times. And it's funny the other day, I was on Instagram Live and my mother has now joined Instagram. She was watching. And so after I got off live, she sent me a text and she said, I'm sorry, I gave you that advice. That was the best advice [Inaudible] [00:09:25] had to give them. And I told mom, I appreciate you and I appreciate you did the best you knew how to do and I appreciate you and I love you. So she was coming from a place of wanting me to be okay. [Inaudible] [00:09:39] And it was a practical choice.

Dr. Adia Gooden: Yes.

Ekene Onu: Right. But and so for me when I looked at all of those I chose pharmacy because I didn't want to be in medical school forever. I didn't enjoy engineering, right? And I didn't want to do law. So I picked pharmacy. It felt like the lesser of all the evils. And I did, and my intention was initially, (00:10:00) that I would do it to just please everyone and then when I graduated, I would then figure out my life. And I ended up going to work and staying as a pharmacist for almost 18 years.

Dr. Adia Gooden: Wow,

Ekene Onu: Now I bring the story to say, it never felt like me. And in fact, most for a lot of my friends group at the time, it was so bizarre to them, right? It's like doing this right. So it added to my sense of a lack of self worth, because I'm not myself. I didn't even I started to get lost more and more and more. As the years went on, I became more and more lost and unsure of where I was. Like, you know, when you're a child and you're a girl, you have more clarity, you have a bit of clarity. I think babies are born with the most clarity till they [Inaudible] [00:10:54] living life, like I want to hug, I want to talk with certainty, desires. And the I am apologetic about it. It's interesting to me when I refer back to the scripture that says that we need to be like children to access the kingdom of heaven. Children are expressive, they are clear, they, you know, they're not masking. They are not carrying the burdens of your problems. This is what I want. This is who I am.

I want to [Inaudible] [00:11:21] I want to be a ballerina, in the middle of the subway. That's what I'm going to do, right. [Inaudible] [00:11:26] But for us we start contorting ourselves and distorting ourselves and over time, I had done all of that. And I found myself lost. Even though on paper, I looked apart right on paper, I was a pharmacist, I was earning this coveted six figure salary that [Inaudible] [00:11:51] I owned a home. I was married. I was a mother. I had ticked all the boxes. But I was so disconnected from who I was in my soul. And I felt really lost. And it was very painful as well. Because and I find this with a lot of women that I connect with and often when I will go into a large an organization or I'll speak and I'll share, usually, so I do quite a bit of speaking. But a lot of times when I'm done speaking, there's a hush that falls over the room. Because you know soul work isn't that rah rah. It's this awareness that goodness it's the awakening. It's gone, right.

And initially, I was like why when other people speak is like alright, [Inaudible] [00:12:45] like but then after they'll come to me and say you spoke to my soul, and oh my god, I'll get messages and letters. And sometimes there's grief that accompanies the sense of possibility that someone like myself will wake up in you because you realize spent so much time money and effort creating a life [Inaudible] [00:13:08] to live.

Dr. Adia Gooden: That is really powerful. That is really powerful. I mean, so much of your story, I think there are so many people who will relate to it, right? Being the good daughter, being the good child, taking care of everyone else and sort of modeling your life after what your parents want for you and very, as you said, well intended because they wanted you to be safe, they wanted to be secure. And they thought that would make you happy and so you spend decades pursuing something, and then wake up and look around and say, well, I have all of the things that

I strive for. But I not, I don't feel like myself, it doesn't feel like me, there's a disconnect. There's something missing, there's something off.

Ekene Onu: Absolutely, that, and that owning that. Right. Because I think that feeling like you said it's very common. It's what we do with the feeling.

Dr. Adia Gooden: Yes.

Ekene Onu: Right.

Dr. Adia Gooden: Yes.

Ekene Onu: So most people medicate the feeling away in one way or another. Right. So I was medicating that feeling at some point because I was eating my feelings, right. So I was fortunate because it started to show on my body. My dissatisfaction became like an extra bot, like extra body weight. It already was carrying the weight of my unfulfilled promise. Right? So I have that but a lot of other people don't do that. Right. Some people consume it away, like buy it away. So they're wearing every new [Inaudible] [00:14:42] I was just talking about. We have a desire for significance in our bodies, a desire in our souls, that is God given because as we become ourselves, so right now I feel like I'm walking in that right now. There is such a sense of yes and I'm here and
(00:15:00)

I'm doing what I'm called to do that feeds you, right? I'm significant. But when you don't have that divine significance, you start looking for false significance which is why we are so caught up in consumerism like I want to get it back, because I want people to know the status I want the meaning that significant, but it's so fleeting, because just as soon as you get it, there's another one, just as soon as you, you can get even a [Inaudible] [00:15:31], there's another one, there's a fact that there's another one, then it's like, the bar keeps getting raised like now. Now it's this [Inaudible] [00:15:38] you keep looking for these things that are meant to enhance the quality of your life, nothing's wrong with those things but they cannot take the place of the significance of your life. And so people have that feeling.

And so for you, my journey to self worth was coming to the place where I was able to own it and say, yeah I have made some choices that don't work for me. And I'm going to start to tear it down brick by brick. And it was terrifying. And it was painful. But there's a wonderful quote that says, And the day came, it's by Anais Nin, And the day came that the pain of remaining in the bud was more than the pain that it took to blossom.

Dr. Adia Gooden: Beautiful.

Ekene Onu: [Inaudible] [00:16:29] right. So there is pain, you got to choose it. And I started to construct things and I left pharmacy without clarity of a plan. I don't recommend it. Always some segue here. So I'm saying, Let me tell you, it was around for a second [Inaudible] [00:16:48] right. But I did leave and found the courage to begin to re-map out my life. And to walk this new journey, even when everyone around me thought I was crazy doing it. And now

this is that was right around that transformational. You know, for me my own journey around 2011. And I started to really do my own self work.

My own journey started to change and a lot of things, a lot of things change as a result. And that's another thing. Because a lot of people, women, especially who are relational, who we crave stability and security. And so even when it's not perfect, even when it's not like great, that whole idea of the devil, you know, it's like, listen, I at least know this. There is stability, even in this discomfort. There is security, even in the scratchy blanket that I'm holding over myself. I'm not sure that I want to let it go. This burden the hand that's picking my hand to death, right? It might still be better than these two, whatever you're saying is out there in the bush. And so it is hard, right?

And because there's with every opportunity, with every gain, there is a loss. And so as I became more of myself, and became aware of my strengths, my weaknesses too, aware of the things that I was doing, because I say to people, I used to be toxic, you know, [Inaudible] [00:18:21] I used to be toxic, I would say things that came out of a pain inside of me, you know, the Bible says from the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. And so when you see people who say things, sometimes he's just nice, nasty or something, it's because there's a woundedness inside and I had a woundedness inside of me. And as I began to unpack and understand myself and heal, and grow, I changed. I set new boundaries. I was also so it was I was simultaneously toxic. I was entertainer, a people pleaser. I was you know we do all these things that matter. You're the one the Martha and Mary, you're the one doing everything.

And then you're mad at everyone because you're doing everything. [Inaudible] [00:19:06] that gives you license to talk to people any kind of way because you are [Inaudible] [00:19:10] life. I sacrificed everything for you. And how dare you, that woman. That's what comes out of living this unfulfilled life. And so I had to begin to also recognize that I had created scaffolding around a life that didn't work. And so this is no longer going to work for the life that I truly desire to live. And this is not about selfishness. This is about self reclaiming. And so in my reclaiming, there was loss. In my reclaiming that was grief. And so left my job I didn't have a job anymore, right, not a pharmacist. Over the years many things have changed.

The community that I had at the time, some of those people no longer part of my life in that way. I loved them all, (00:20:00) but they're just no longer part of my life. You know, even I'm no longer married which is another thing because people you join in with people based on, you know, if you are in alignment with someone who isn't in alignment with your brokenness. That's why when you start to heal that alignment, you no longer be there, right? So there are challenges, but at the same time, it is one of the richest journeys of my life. Because on a practical like, most basic, tangible level, right, that what I was earning as a pharmacist, I far exceed that, I far exceed that now, right. And I have a staff of four people, some of the women on my team are breadwinners.

And so to support by doing the work that I'm doing, they can support their families, right, and everyone works remotely. So they get to create a schedule that makes sense to them as mothers, right? I am able to impact literally when I think about the footprint that I have and that my clients are in all different countries and continents and doing all sorts of amazing things. There are some

luminaries that I can count as clients I'm like, wow, look at what you've been able to do through me [Inaudible] [00:21:22] and then my daughter, and I have two girls. And when the conversations we have, and I was talking to my older daughter, who, you know, I raised her since she was 15. And we were just talking and I was just looking at the woman she's become, and I was making a joke with her because I like to wear my hair like an Afro [Inaudible] [00:21:43] just keep on keep on copying. That's good.

We impact our kids, right? Obviously I didn't choose I'm not her biological mother. But her biological mother poured into her and continue supporting her. But also so did I and then my daughter who I am my younger when we talk and she says mommy you used to be this way. And now you're this way. I'm so grateful. And I love the relationship we have and we're growing every day. And I'm proud of you. And what makes me so happy is that her being able to say to me, I'm proud of your growth, it also gives her permission to say to herself [Inaudible] [00:22:26]. So the rewards, I wouldn't you know, when my [Inaudible] [00:22:31] says I'd take nothing for my journey. Like I feel that in my soul. So in a long winded way.

Dr. Adia Gooden: So much of what you're saying, it's just so what like you have such a wise presence, I feel your presence coming through the computer screen and it's so resonates, I think there are a couple things that I just love to highlight and punctuate because you're just sharing so much wisdom, such a wealth of knowledge and wisdom. And you said we will search for meaning. We will search for significance. And we may do that by trying to buy all the things or have the job titles or have the relationship status and come up feeling empty because we're not truly feeding what our soul needs and connecting to our own internal worthiness. That was so powerful and so I just encourage the listeners like if you notice that for yourself, if you notice, I'm always online sort of mindlessly shopping. I'm always looking for the next thing or constantly posted on social media for the attention of others.

What are you truly trying to fill? What are you truly trying to nourish? And can you slow down and step back and think about what really needs to be nourished here because these external things are not going to do it, aren't doing it. You also talked about self medicated and there's so many ways. We shop, we eat, we drink, we do drugs. There is so many we made social media self medicate, always keep ourselves busy and distracted.

Ekene Onu: We work even.

Dr. Adia Gooden: Right. That's a huge, huge one. You're right, right, overworking, constantly being busy. And that it can be a sign that you're not connected to yourself, that there is a disconnect. So again, if you're finding yourself doing those things, how can you slow down and notice and check in and I think one of the things we have to be really thoughtful about. I love your honesty Ekene because we can blame it on everybody else. well, my boss just makes me work all the time. Right? Or, you know, social media is just like that, we can paint ourselves as the victim of our circumstance but really the way we can change is by being empowered and saying no, I created this. (00:25:00)

Yes I was socialized into it. Yes these circumstances led me to this place where I created this toxicity or created this in my life. And I have the responsibility to start shifting it. So that I think

is another you're modeling that what that looks like. And then I also just love how you're acknowledging that there is loss, and there is grief. And that if you are going to truly become who you are, if you are going to fully bloom, they're going to have to let go of some things. And that process can be painful. And as you're saying, it is so worth it to have the relationship with your daughters that you have, to have the business that you have, to be living in your full expression of yourself is so beautiful and so rich that it's worth the loss and the loss of this life would have been more painful than sticking with that other life that you had.

Ekene Onu: Absolutely, it would have been. And in fact, I've met people down the line, you know, because in the work that I do, I get to connect with all generations, multi-generational. My, didn't do a lot of work with like Gen Z and younger but like millennial, I do. And I've had the opportunity to talk to women in their 60s, when sometimes you meet women in their 60s who still have the courage and energy because your energy declines as you get older, to say, You know what, I'm going for it, and that always makes me excited. But then you meet women who life because I tell you life, life's right. And you go through life, and based on whatever you've been through your process and the way you show up, you might look different. I'll tell you the thing about living a life of purpose, purpose protects. That's why for me when I walked through, like, you know and if you haven't picked up by now, dear listeners have Unconditionally Worthy. I'm a closet preacher.

So I will drop a Bible verse or two. Because not for any other reason, but because I literally, I mean, I eat the word and it feeds me. But you know, there is what it was and I just lost my train of thought. I was talking about purpose protects. Yes. So you know, the scripture that says, you know, your walk through fire, and the smell of smoke will not be on your clothes, feel like I want to say that in a Nigerian accent. [Inaudible] [00:27:29] When we read that we always read these things.

The scripture as purely from a supernatural blessing standpoint, like God is going to do something from the heavens that will allow me to walk through fire, the smell of smoke will not be on clothes because and we do know that God can and does, miracles do occur. But what I've also learned is that when you get into what I call divine alignment, and you are walking in the ordained path for you, and you're walking in purpose, the way you walk through fire, your attitude, your perspective, everything changes. The way you show up such that people look at you and they're saying, goodness, gracious. I heard you went through all of these things. But I don't see it on you. You don't look the way I think you should look.

Dr. Adia Gooden: You are not burned up.

Ekene Onu: You are not burned up. You can through a storm or you come through a storm. Some people go through life and their wiggles askew everything is upside down and other people that come through, come through and they're like, yeah, that was a storm. All right. But I use energy of the storm to take me to this next level. And that's the value of purpose. You see, sometimes I meet people later on in life and because they haven't been purposeful. They don't quite know their purpose. Haven't really had the courage to walk in it. They have just let life lead them and they live a life by default and not by design.

They're kind of below whether it looks like and when I am talking about my beat up I've met people who Chanel bag wearing, Ranger Rover driving, first class flying and they are emotionally beat up. Because there is a cost of living an inauthentic life. And by the time I meet them, and they think about it, you see the sadness crossed their face. It's too late. I don't have the energy to start. And what would my life have been like? What if I had let myself be real? What if I had let myself be me? What if I had left myself be loved? Because often highest level cost. Everything else you will you can figure it out and put money and all that. But I tell you when you yourself don't know yourself don't live your truth, don't live the way God intended, the cost of it is that you don't love yourself and if you don't truly love yourself, (00:30:00) how can anyone else love you and they can't even know you.

Dr. Adia Gooden: (00:30:07) Have you ever considered launching your own podcast but don't know where to start? Is your podcast idea still taking up space in your head and your launch to-do list too long and tedious? You need a gentle push in the right direction and I highly recommend you consult the team at Crys & Tiana, a podcast launch production company helping entrepreneurs like you and I launch podcast without the overwhelm. That way you can focus on what you do best, talking, connecting and sharing your special message with the world. Crys and Tiana allowed me to relax and focus on creating meaningful content that I'm proud of while connecting with all of you. They keep me organized and on track so I can spend less time on tedious tasks and more time in my zone of genius. Crys and Tiana's team will help you declutter your priorities, identify your most important podcast goals, create a plan for execution and lead you to success. They'll provide you with the structure and accountability you need to thrive, which means you can use your newfound time to focus on growing your business, making a bigger impact and more money, doing what you love. Whether you're a coach, entrepreneur, or lifestyle brand, Crys & Tiana will help you take your podcast to the next level. Book a podcast on strategy call today and start turning your podcast dreams into reality. Go to www.crysandtiana.com/launchstrategy for 25% off a launch strategy session. You can also find the link in the show notes.

My hope for people is that they know that it's never too late. If you're still breathing, if you're still living in the next moment, you can always choose something different. And that's a lot of the times the practices that I'm offering to people in my group coaching programs and on the podcasts are for self forgiveness. Because if you come to a place where you say, what have I been doing for the last 5 years, 10 years, 20 30, 40 years, there's going to need to be some forgiveness. You're going to need to release that. You're going to need to acknowledge yes, you know, I wasn't living my authentic self. And I'm not going to beat myself, I'm not going to spend 10 more years beating myself up over it. I'm going to forgive myself, understand where I was coming from a pain place. And I'm going to move forward. So that's one and two it's sort of like how can you engage in your values such that okay, well, what do I want to do today? What do I want today to look like? And I so agree with this piece of letting people love you. Because so often if we don't truly feel worthy, and we don't love ourselves, we're either we're hiding, so people can't really see us. And then the person they love, we think, well, they don't really know me, they don't love me. And sometimes we literally block the love. We don't allow ourselves to receive. We don't allow ourselves to let it in because it feels too vulnerable. We feel unworthy. And so that needs to be a practice, because we so often long for love, but we don't allow it in.

Ekene Onu: Yes. 100%. You know, and that's the work for me with Iconic Womanhood, a large chunk of what we're doing, right? Helping women come to an awareness of the fullness of what womanhood looks like. But then the iconic part is their own unique way of being a woman. Right? And the reason why, first of all, Iconic Womanhood wasn't necessarily a branding choice. It wasn't like, we were doing a branding exercise and picked it up. It was a divine download. And in fact, when I first got it, I was like, holy spirit please can we check for a second? Who should carry this brand, Iconic Womanhood I said, Why? Because it's a big word to say Iconic. But I've come to understand what the word means in a deeper way. In fact, we have I use an acronym that we've with trademarking and so in the trademark process already, right? And it's being a woman who is inspirational, who's courageous, who's original, who's necessary, who's intentional, and who's compelling.

And all of these things are all of us, right? And I believe the word iconic really, for the reason why God wanted us to use that word, if I may use that term, is because he wants us to be called higher to the fullest highest expression of ourselves. And the connection between that and love and being fully expressed your femininity, is this so often, we build a life around our mediocre expression of us. So we choose people who see, (00:35:00) who can only love the lower version of ourselves whether it be friends, whether it be an organization that doesn't ever give you the opportunity to do more projects, and you've been waiting for a promotion for years, they're not giving you a promotion because they don't see you in your iconicness.

They can only see you at your lowest version. Whether you choose a, you're in a relationship especially if you're, if you're in a relationship where you're not married. Come on, sis, let me talk to you for a second [Inaudible] [00:35:34] because when you're married is a bit more complicated. But if you are in that season, where you're still getting to, you know, pay attention because women have been socialized to be chosen and not to choose. So let's wake up for a minute. I want you to ask yourself, in my highest version of myself would this still work? Is this person seeing me that way? Are they treating me that way? Or are you constantly begging for the bare minimum? Are you constantly accepting the basic and are you accepting that from yourself as well because the call to Iconic Womanhood, the work that I do with my clients is saying now listen, we have to rise. And even for me, on the basic level, like for example, getting up like I used to hate making my bed, like literally I was I never did, even as an adult. I now like making my bed. It was a whole thing.

When I started the brand Iconic Woman even as a coach, when I started coaching initially, I will confess, let me confess to all of you all here very often, I would coach by [Inaudible] [00:36:44] Now, this is not to judge anyone who doesn't make their bed. I'm just telling you my story now. Now, here's the thing. Even when I look at my bed in my bedroom, today, I asked myself when I get up, is this an iconic woman's bedroom? Get your act together and make that bed. Fluff those pillows and make it happen. I talked to myself. I use it as a call to myself higher. Now I don't purport to be perfect. I don't purport to be iconic as far as anyone elses.

But it's a way to tell me, I am holding myself to higher standards. I'm going to go to that next level in my business. I'm going to go to that next level in my revenue stream. I'm going to go to that next level in the level of impacts that I have an influence. I'm going to push to that next level and how I treat myself. Treat with myself. When I go to the gym, I'm going to eat good food,

good, high quality food because I deserve that. I need that [Inaudible] [00:37:47] first class when I can. Why less.

Dr. Adia Gooden: Yes. Well, I you know, I love that. I love that one that you're saying it's a calling up, right versus a beating down because too often, we use "high expectations" to be our I can't believe you didn't make the bed today. Who are you? You're just so messy [Inaudible] [00:38:11] and if you talk to yourself that way, you are not going to step into your power as you move into the day. But if you say come on, you deserve better. You deserve a bed that's made. You deserve a bedroom that feels good and looks good. Let's pull that together that helps you to step into your power. And I'm going to ask you to talk about like feminine power just a second. But I also want to just highlight what she said about relationships. Because so often we are in relationships with people who do not want us to be our greatest self. And you notice it in little ways. You have an accomplishment. They say yeah, you know, I've done something greater. That's okay. But I've done something better. One of the ways that I knew my husband was for me when we first started dating is about three weeks after we started dating, I had a TEDx talk, I was going to give my TEDx talk. And he responded to that by saying, Wow, he found, he got his ticket, even though sold out. He took the day off work. He almost never take the day off work. He drove me there. And then he went, he bought me flowers. He took me to a celebratory dinner, and he gets excited. Every time I have an accomplishment. He's excited for me.

Ekene Onu: I'm looking for my pom poms. Right.

Dr. Adia Gooden: Right. And so that was so different than other people I had dated who were kind of like, whatever, right and made me feel like I should stay small to stay with them.

Ekene Onu: Yes.

Dr. Adia Gooden: And it's so important for people to one see, wow, this person is going to be great. I want to be there from the beginning. And I want to support her in that and I'm so excited and I'm encouraging you. Not enough of us have that and so let's take your advice, right, let's take your advice and if somebody is not seeing your greatness and encouraging your greatness, if you're feeling like you got to shrink even just a little bit (00:40:00) to be with someone, let's reconsider, that not, it's going to constrain you in the long run.

Ekene Onu: As we say, in Nigeria, shine your eye, shine your eye like really so important because I say this to woman, I was married for about 18 years. And I've now gone through a divorce. And I'd say to, and I can say now from this vantage point, first of all what I can say about marriage, even though I ended my marriage, there were some incredible things that came along with marriage. And I still believe in marriage. I think it's an incredible opportunity when you have the right partner. It is a beautiful thing. And one that if you desire it, keep desiring it. But it can also be a tremendously damaging thing, particularly for women, because we tend to orient our lives and the way, this patriarchal systems we live in, women tend to have to orient their lives around their men. Right. And so you really want to make sure you're choosing a partner that you can be in your feminine with. So this is a good segue sort of into feminine, right?

Dr. Adia Gooden: Right.

Ekene Onu: Because if not, and that's where those standards early on are important. But it's hard to set standards, when you don't know yourself, and you don't value yourself, you don't know your worth. Because only that standards come from that place. If you don't think you're worthy of it, you're just grateful, like someone loves me as I am. Let me just take whatever whoever comes my way. But when you know, right, then you can take a pause and ask, because you always you even know when this is you see the red flags, but because you've been conditioned to believe, maybe I'm going to have red flags. So if it's only two let me thank God there's only two. Some people have five, right? So are you kind of find a way we really do rationalizing things in our heads. And let me just break it down to you.

Majority of marriage, majority of divorces are initiated by women you know this, especially around what the season that I call well, I don't just call it that. The wild woman season. So I teach on the seasons of womanhood. There is the girl. There is the maiden season, the mother's season. A lot of times people get consumed in motherhood. And so even when things aren't working, you're a mother, you don't have time to think about anything else. But then the wild woman season which usually you start to enter into your empty nesting season just a little bit, or the kids don't need you as much. That's when you start to see a lot of divorces being initiated.

Because that's also when women start to come into a place of self actualization. And they're like, wait a minute, this does not, I can't accept this anymore. And so you start to see breaks at that time. Now, the other thing that let me give you some other statistics, divorce can be very costly for both. People think is just men that pay the cost. Actually, that's not true majority. A lot of women pay a tremendous amount of money, emotional pain, and more in divorce. These days is more and more common for women to pay for child support, more and more common for a woman to pay palimony. Let me talk to you about your money honey, is more and more common and even if you don't pay for any of these things, just your lawyer's fees, whoa, and the cost of divorce emotionally, because some people just feel like, if it doesn't work, I'll get a divorce. I still maintain this even though I have come through. In fact, I'm doing a series on my email list about things people can do to reclaim their womanhood after an experience like this.

But I used to say this before I experienced this, and I still believe that there's truth to the statement is that when you marry somebody, it's like two pieces of paper that come together that are glued together and when you pull apart, which is what a divorce will do, right? Sometimes when you imagine two pieces of paper, depending on how you pull it apart, you might be left with gaping holes in each one, nobody will be whole. So it's an important thing. And even for me during my process, the Holy Spirit had given me certain awarenesses and certain things to do and certain ways to go about it and the thing he had told me is like you need to see your family, your new family as a delicate gold filigree necklace. You can't just let this tangled up. You have to take your time and untangle that because all of you are precious to me. Every single one of you, your children are precious to me. You are precious to me, your ex-husband is precious to me. So you're going to take your time and figure out how to do this in the most gentle, generous way you can and listen to this anybody talking to you from a place of bitterness, you take your time. And so for us that was part of the (00:45:00) process. It didn't look like wisdom to some people. It didn't look like, you know, like, you should fight for this. And like, let me tell you, all of those

things you're talking about those things are meaningless to me. What matters is the state of our hearts. And in you know, that takes even the self worth journey.

Dr. Adia Gooden: Yes.

Ekene Onu: Because you're not coming from a place of angry, anger, I own certain things and I'm like, Okay. And also it comes from a feminine place because the feminine is nurturing. And I gave myself permission to be feminine, even in a challenging experience to look and to come from that place.

Dr. Adia Gooden: Yeah.

Ekene Onu: You know, and you know, not mothering but nurturing.

Dr. Adia Gooden: Yeah.

Ekene Onu: So it's being in your feminine for me. Such an incredible opportunity for women. And I teach on femininity in a particular way. I know that there's a lot of some lady told me, I hate femininity coaches. I can't stand them. I said, I feel you. I'm not that kind of femininity coach. In fact that people call me that, but I have a womanhood coach which is a little bit different. I mean, feminine it is part of womanhood, it's, womanhood is not inside of femininity. Femininity is inside a womanhood. Womanhood is more encompasses more, and it's more of an empowerment, right? And so I'm not here to tell you how to perform because there's something I call performative feminine.

Dr. Adia Gooden: Well perform to get a man often right.

Ekene Onu: Performative femininity we're going to like I love it, elegant videos but I was saying to someone, like I am a woman which means that sometimes I am an elegant, freely go but sometimes I'm not. Okay. And I am going to love it. I am going to love it. And I'm embracing all parts of me, like I am that woman who yes I'd like to I can talk about the finer things in life. But I can torque as well. All right. And I think that's the beauty of womanhood and the expansiveness of it, that sometimes, the way we're teaching about femininity, that actress actually, to your point centers men is actually a disempowered version of it. So perform and be this way. And of course, even the conversation around the soft life, who wants to suffer. I don't want to suffer. But for me, I am not looking for a life where I'm ornamental.

No matter how wonderful my partner is and how wealthy he is I am not looking to become an ornament in my life. I'm not looking to be put on a mantle and admired for my beauty, and my feminine affectations all day long. I'm not looking for a life that I spent all my time grooming myself, like a cat, no shade to those of you that do. I'm talking about, okay, I'm just talking about, I'm not looking for that I believe that I have a call upon my life. Now, I would like support. That's part of being receptive. I would love it for someone I was saying to someone the other day, let me tell you, submission is not a dirty word if you have, it's the challenge is that people talk about submission, but they don't talk about masculine leadership. A lot of people that are talking about submission are not talking about leadership.

You need to be talking about whether women should submit and talk about how men need to learn how to lead. Now when you do that, the other part because it works together, because we submit all the time. Men and women are meant to submit to each other and we submit all the time in life. You submit to, I was listening to a preacher friend of mine and he was saying how, listen, that he sees women submitting all the time. When you go to the salon, and this was in Nigeria, you see a woman sit down, no matter how she might be a CEO, but the braider will say to her sit down here, turn your head this way.

So I can bring your head that's great. And she turns. She doesn't argue she doesn't say she submits to the braider's authority because the promise of something better is there. Right. And so when I think about what our connection is, and I know submission may, some of you may run out, like turned it off already. Come back, please. Right. Because submission we are meant to submit to each other. It's a two and it's this dance of the masculine and the feminine and feminine power is being able to and we have both by the way, but when I discuss about feminine power, what I mean is women, that a woman who lead more with their feminine and is undergirded by the masculine and then their men who lead more with the masculine and there is, it's undergirded by the feminine to put the feminine traits, right.

So some of the feminine traits I mentioned nurturing, receptivity, creativity, (00:50:00) intuition, the feminine when you lead with feminine, you're a woman who is more like water flow. Right? You flow. And when you lead with masculine, right, the theory is that more men lead with masculine, you're more like a boulder, your power is more solid, stable, structured, right. And so you can see the difference between the two. But both of them have a different type of power. And so being able to recognize, well, these are the my, this is my opportunity. That's the way I look at it. I'm a woman. I'm a woman who lives with my feminine. So wow, look at my opportunity.

I'm not trying to do it like a man, because that's actually not my highest level like trying to hardcore, like, I will never get into a relationship where I have to keep putting down my foot, you know, put your foot down. And I'm like, I don't want to break my foot. I don't want that. So if I had to put my foot down with you, then I can't be with you. Because that means I can't be in my feminine, I have to now move into my masculine, it doesn't work for me. What works for me is a life where I can be more in my feminine, most of the time. I can be creative, I can be intuitive. I can be receptive. I can be more in my flow. I like to be that way when I am, so I build a business that works for me that way.

I get the kind of support that allows me to be that way. I have relationships that allow me to be that way because I'm my best in that way. I still have structure, of course, I still have some masculine qualities that we need. But we need to be able to recognize that these, it's an opportunity. It's not like something you said earlier, it's a calling up, not tearing down, meeting down [Inaudible] [00:51:50] because now the femininity messaging is being used to be down woman, especially [Inaudible] [00:51:54] masculine. But the reality is, if you think about it, the words I've said I get to be in my feminine. It's an opportunity. But many of us haven't had the opportunity. I built a business that has given me the opportunity. Because it's successful. I have financial support for my business. I'm able to do certain things. So I get to be my feminine but a

lot of women are the providers, and they have to hustle and go out there. And and like if I'm working two jobs and I don't have anyone to protect me, I'm the protector. And every day I'm going to bed worried about how to take care of my children, I'm stressed. Yeah, you're going to be your masculine. And don't let anyone beat you up for it because you're doing what you need to do to survive.

Dr. Adia Gooden: Yeah.

Ekene Onu: The awareness, though, is to say, okay, this is how my life is today. But how can I begin to reorient it. Right. And those are some of the things that I help women do in the woman who work; how can I begin to reorient it so that I can have the opportunity to show up as my best as a woman?

Dr. Adia Gooden: Yeah, thank you for breaking all of that down. It's really powerful. And I think it's going to you know, just like spark some thoughts for people, right is, how do you think about connecting to your masculine side, your feminine side? How do you step into power? Because so often, the way we think about power is just masculine, right? It's like, if you're going to be powerful in this world, you need to put on armor, you need to be hard, you need to be aggressive, right? Like, that's our conception of power.

And I love that you focus on helping women to claim the power in their femininity and their womanhood, right, that there is power that can feel soft and nurturing, right? Even when you're talking about your divorce, right? There's a way of claiming your power, if you're saying, I'm going to stay true to who I am, and to how I am and how I want to be in this world. Even in this divorce, I'm not going to fall prey to this idea that I've got to be aggressive. And I've got to be mean, and I've got to be cutthroat and I've got to take what I need and run and I don't care who's you know who's hurt by this, right? But I'm going to be powerful in who I am even in this painful and difficult process which is a divorce. I'm going to honor who I am.

And I'm going to honor the relationship we had, I think not enough people feel that that is possible. And so it's amazing that you're modeling that. But I would love for people to think about yeah, when do I, when am I in my masculine and when am I in my feminine and when does either feel good? Because there are going to be some times when women feel good and empowered in a more masculine way of being and feel good and empowered in a more feminine way of being and same for men and people who are non-binary and all of those things. Right. So helping people I think to just ask the question and explore and I love that you're saying also part of your Iconic Womanhood (00:55:00) is people then also figuring out what works for them.

There are some of these generalities, but at the end of the day, you have to tune into, who are you, and what works for you. And when you're grounded in your self worth, when you're grounded in self love, it's so much easier to figure out how do I want to show up authentically in the world. And I think the last thing I wanted to just touch on, which you made me think about was so often people think that this work of self love and self worth or even claiming your womanhood or believing you're an icon of some sort is selfish, but what you're communicating over and over again, is that it's actually part of a higher calling and that when we can own our power, when we can own our worthiness, we can own our iconic menace, that's actually when we

can show up and serve the world the best, that's when we can bring forth our gifts. That's when and authentically not in a way that wears us down and runs us into the ground. But in a way that's generative and generates energy for us, generates abundance for us, and also pours it out into the world.

Ekene Onu: That's right. That's right. Here here.

Dr. Adia Gooden: Well, this has been such an amazing conversation, I just, you know, I feel like you have poured out a wealth of wisdom. And I see why you say that people feel like their souls are touched when they hear you because I feel that and so I know that you're just you know, powerfully impacting so many women and I'm imagining there's a lot of people listening who are thinking, how can I, you know, follow, I can even you're talking I'm like, I want to get on this email list. You know, and I know people are going to want to connect with you and know about how you serve people, because it's clear that it's very healing and empowering. So let people know, how can they follow you? How can they connect with you further?

Ekene Onu: Yeah, I think one of if you're on social, I'm most active on Instagram. So if you follow me at [iconicwomanhood_coach](#), that's my personal page. Right. So at [iconicwomanhood_coach](#). And I usually tell people what's going on like. So we have a couple of things happening, programs that are available. I don't know when this podcast is going up. But we have a couple of programs. In November, we have our annual womanhood weekend. We call it the Iconic Woman Weekend. And if you have enjoyed some of the conversations that we've had, and you want to kind of deep dive into that, we're going to be in Jamaica, in November, for four days. [Inaudible] [00:57:41]

Dr. Adia Gooden: It sounds perfect.

Ekene Onu: [Inaudible] [00:57:43] Okay, and it's going to be we have chosen all inclusive resort. You're going to have incredible women from all around and I take you through a very unique experience. It's not a conference where there's a lot of speaking. There are workshops where you will do some elevation work, but it is really mostly about embodiment. So you have a lot of experiences, where the knowledge gets kind of grounded and into your body so to speak. And it's just, this is annual one.

Dr. Adia Gooden: Wow.

Ekene Onu: [Inaudible] [00:58:15] I'm doing it. Yes. And we're intentionally fairly intimate. So we're getting close to our numbers. But yeah we're intentionally it's not going to be hundreds of women. So you won't feel lost in it. Right. It's perfect for that woman who is working really hard and just saying to herself I need something. So it's called iconic woman weekend. All you need to do is go to [iconicwomanweekend.com](#) and learn more about that. Like I said, following me on Instagram is the key. And then we do have a tool. So typically, when women are listening to this, like, where do I start? If you've never started, and you just want something I do have a free tool. It's a journaling tool. And that we will be happy to provide to your listeners and they can download the tool and then that will actually get you on our list as well. So you can go through that process. Yes.

Dr. Adia Gooden: Wonderful.

Ekene Onu: Thank you so much for this opportunity.

Dr. Adia Gooden: Yeah, well, we'll link all of those things, your Instagram, about the Iconic Women Weekend and the tool in the shownotes. So if you're listening, check the show notes for wherever you're listening. And you can sign up and look into all this information. And thank you so much for sharing your presence and your wisdom with us. This has been really wonderful.

Ekene Onu: I appreciate you. Thank you for having me.

Dr. Adia Gooden: You're welcome. Thanks for joining me this week on the Unconditionally Worthy podcast. Make sure to visit my website Dradiagooden.com and subscribe to the show on iTunes so you'll never miss an episode. You can also follow me on social media at Dr. Adia Gooden. If you love the show, please leave a review on iTunes. So we can continue to bring you (01:00:00) amazing episodes. Lastly, if you found this episode helpful and know someone who might benefit from hearing it, please share it. Thanks for listening and see you next episode.

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