

THE COMBUSTION CHRONICLES

**EPISODE THIRTY-SEVEN
THE COST OF FEAR**

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GUEST: TABATHA COFFEY

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Shawn: Welcome to *The Combustion Chronicles* podcast. Where bold leaders combine with big ideas to create game-changing disruption.

I'm Shawn Nason, your host for *The Combustion Chronicles* podcast. Throughout this series, we're bringing together the most unique and influential minds we could find to have honest conversations about not being okay with the status quo, blowing shit up, and working together to influence our shared future.

We believe that when bold leaders ignite consumer-centric ideas with passion and grit, the result is an explosion that creates a better world for all of us.

On this episode of *The Combustion Chronicles*, we have Tabatha Coffey. Tabatha is credited for her ability to help struggling businesses and people's lives transform. Through her no-nonsense approach and savvy business expertise, she draws on her own life experiences and her transformative coaching skills to offer straightforward advice and deliver her empowering message of inner beauty and strength. Her television show, speaking appearances, and books inspire women and men around the world to take charge of their lives, their businesses, and their futures. Tabatha's television presence includes her Bravo shows *Tabatha's Salon Takeover*, *Tabatha Takes Over*, and *Relative Success*, as well as appearing as an expert on numerous daytime TV shows, including *The Talk*, *Dr. Oz*, *The Rachael Ray Show*, *"Good Morning America*, *The Today Show*, and *Fashion Police*. Tabatha's memoir, *It's Not Really About the Hair: The Truth About Life, Love, and The Business of Beauty* is in its fourth printing published by HarperCollins. Her second book, *Own It! Business and Life Lessons*, also published by HarperCollins, is in its third printing.

Tabatha, welcome to *The Combustion Chronicles*.

Tabatha: Hi, Shawn. Thanks for having me.

Shawn: Oh, it's such an honor Tabatha, to have you on here. I have to just say I am a total fan of yours. I've watched all your shows and I've always loved how you have presented yourself and helped businesses. I had no idea until recently, even more, what you're doing in individuals' lives. So, what a level set with our audience. And I heard you say that you fell into the TV business. Do you want to quickly walk us through your journey that led to your appearance on the Bravo reality show "Shear Genius?" And what was that like for you?

Tabatha: Sure. TV was never a dream that I had, so it wasn't something I was actively pursuing. There was [an open casting call that went out to hairdressers through an agency that I worked with to do fashion shoots and editorial work. And honestly, I call it serendipity. There was something about it that just really made me want to go and go to this casting call and see what it was all about. So, I made a deal with myself that I would turn up, it was a Sunday in New York. And if it took longer than an hour, I was going to go ahead with my Sunday brunch plans and bag the whole thing. And I was in and out really quickly, got a call back the next day. And as they say, the rest is history.

Shawn: Wow. That's fun. Did you end up having Sunday brunch? That's the big question.

Tabatha: I did have Sunday brunch and it was delicious and filled with stories of...that was a fun little experience, but I don't think anything will ever happen from it.

Shawn: Well, awesome, Tabatha. So, you gave an amazing TED Talk that really spoke to the importance of being true to yourself and owning that truth. And I live in that space quite a lot, Tabatha. And in that talk, you mentioned being recognized in public after appearing on TV. And strangers would say to you, "Hey, you're that bitch on TV." And you also mentioned falling down the rabbit hole a bit when it comes to reading the online comments section, as well, and social media. So, your initial response to hearing and reading those comments was what? And why do you think you were perceived that way?

Tabatha: My initial response to reading all the comments was despair is probably a good word. Once I open Pandora's box of reading the comments, because we're humans, we don't hang onto the positive things that people say, we just go right to the negative and they become the most powerful things. So, when you're reading about people's opinion and it isn't even based on your work, it's based on how you look or the way you present yourself or that I have a mole on my eyebrow, it was quite a rabbit hole that I really spent a weekend in. Listening and realized it was a very destructive place to be so, removed myself from it and didn't go back down there again.

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I think the way I was perceived was that I am a strong, outspoken, incredibly passionate individual that really cared about what I do and the craft that I do, which is hairdressing. And the fact that I had that label of bitch put on me, I don't think people knew what else to say. And that was the problematic thing for me because instead of saying, "Oh my God, you're so passionate, or you're a real go-getter, or you're that Australian girl from television, or you're a

hairdresser," the only word they knew to use was "bitch". And that has helped my experience today because I realized that so many women get that label put upon them in a way that can hold them back or keep them small instead of shining.

Shawn: Tabatha, let's go there because in your talk, though, you mentioned that strong, confident, and passionate women are often labeled as bitches in our society. And unfairly, those exact same qualities in men are received completely different. And I happened to be one of those men who would probably be labeled as a bitch in the rest of the world because I have no problem being strong and confident in that space. Where do you feel those drastic differences come from? How do they impact women in society and in business?

Tabatha: It definitely is systemic. And it is problematic because men that are forthright and honest and confident and strong and passionate, all the things you just said, Shawn, are labeled go-getters and forthright and powerhouses and all of these positive words. But when women often show the same qualities, they are called bitches, especially when they're speaking their truth or standing up for themselves or sharing their opinion. And it is a way that we keep women small in business and society. And it hurts. It hurts to be called that word when you are just sharing your ideas or defending your truths or standing up for yourself or someone else.

And I speak to so many women and coach so many women that are either afraid of being called that word because they don't want the stigma attached to it because they feel like it takes away from all the good parts and all the great qualities that they have. Or women in business that are called that word and try to cover it up and overcompensate by being too accommodating sometimes, or playing right into what gets them called a bitch in the first place, their strength, and not showing their compassionate and kind side or having the empathy that they need, and somehow hiding their other qualities. And anytime we do that, we start to not show up authentically and not show up as the best version of ourselves.

Shawn: That leads me into something even around this fear that it causes. And just this year, I released, with two co-authors, a second book called *Kiss Your Dragons*, and I have to say that, in your TED talk, you said something that really struck me and I've listened to it two or three times now. You said that "you don't need to go and slay dragons. Sometimes it's brave to just get out of bed in the morning and face your day". You have said, and I've heard you mentioned, that you very intentionally face your fears. And has this always been a mindset that you have embraced or is that a very conscious decision you make every morning when you face your day?

Tabatha: So, I think it's both. One of the things that I ask people a lot, and I ask myself this question also, is what has fear cost you? Because fear has a price. So, it either costs us something financially because we're not growing our businesses or putting ourselves out there to get the clients that we need, it costs us emotionally because it keeps us small and stops us trying new things for the fear of being ridiculed or judged or labeled in some way, or it costs us spiritually because we put our dreams on a back burner because of fear. So, we don't know all the possibility available to us.

I learned very young because I had some experiences in my childhood and growing up where some of the scariest things that could happen happened. And I survived. So, that was a good muscle memory to face fear because I got through some pretty awful things and I was still here. And I survived those things. And as we know, most of the fears that we have really come in around self-doubt and believing we're not good enough or believing we can't have what we want, or that we're going to be judged in some way. And it holds us back so much. So, I do make conscious decisions of what has fear cost me? Or what is fear going to cost me? And what will it mean if I don't try and face that dragon? Or what will it mean if I give in to that nagging voice of fear and not step forward with courage?

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Shawn: That's really powerful. And I'm sitting here just processing as you're talking around that, Tabatha, because that's the essence of what we talked about in this book, *Kiss Your Dragons*, is moving from mindsets to heart sets and making those decisions every day. And as you have leaned into your authentic self over these years and facing those fears, what guidance would you give someone else who is looking to lean into kissing their dragon or being their authentic self? What advice would you give them today?

Tabatha: So, I think the first thing is to ask yourself that question, what has fear cost you? What is the cost of it? How are you watering yourself down, keeping yourself small, hiding your passion, not living your purpose, your potential, or your joy because of this fear? And I look at fear as a barometer. Fear is just an emotion like any other emotion. So, when you look at it as such and realize it's just an emotion, it also allows you to realize you have some control over it. So, what is the fear trying to tell you? Is it trying to tell you that maybe you need to do more work on your business plan before you launch that business? Is it telling you, "You know what, hurry up. Tick tock. Time is wasting and you're not getting any younger. So, just go out there and do it already."

Fear normally always has... if you embrace it and start to question it, it has something that it's trying to show you. And I encourage everyone to do that, to see what the cost of fear is and then see what the fear is trying to tell you. I do SWOT analysis, personally and in business. So, I look at my strengths, my weaknesses. I look at what is available to me. I look at what opportunities I have. And all of those things start to dismantle that fear. I think the more we embrace our fear, the more we kiss our dragons, the more we make friends with it, the more we can learn about it and move through it anyway.

Shawn: I love it. And I hope our listeners take this that... You've got two dragon kissers right here who have faced fears, and who faced them every day. And it's okay. And it's okay to say, "This is uncomfortable, but I'm gonna lean into that." And I so appreciate how, even in your own life, you have pivoted in so many different ways and have moved into this personal coaching space, working to help other women navigate both their lives and their businesses. You're an accredited coach, a master NLP practitioner, and you're certified with multiple therapy boards as well. What was the catalyst for this career shift in your life?

Tabatha: So, for me, I think what I always did as an educator within the hairdressing industry, part of teaching people about their business or sharing knowledge about a technique or a skill was also coaching them and empowering them to implement it into their daily life and their business. It was definitely part of the formula of what I did on television and taking over people's business was also being a coach to them. And again, trying to empower them and get out of their own way. And I started to realize, through so many people reaching out to me, working with other people's businesses, that it really does come down to mindset. And if we can't...even if we're amazing technically at what we do, even if we have all this great training, even if we have the motivation sometimes and the skill set, if we can't turn that switch in our brain to change that mindset and believe in ourselves and be resilient and overcome those fears and keep moving forward, we may not have the success that we deserve and we should have.

So, I took a step back and really wanted to get the education I needed to make sure that I could help individuals and businesses in the right way and in the most effective and the quickest way, not just giving opinion but giving educated formulas and knowledge, and in 2017, started going down learning about coaching, getting my practitioner licenses. And it is a real passion for me now.

Shawn: That's awesome. I have this philosophy, Tabatha, that mindsets are learned and that they can switch as you go through life. And that's what I heard from you there. How do you

measure mindsets that can change and mature and become different as you change as a person to what we call heart sets? And heart sets are those things that are deeply rooted in you that you value. I was a pastor in one of my careers and that's a whole nother story. But marrying your heart to your mindsets, what advice do you give to people? Or would you give to our listeners today to say, how do you make that journey from your head to your heart a successful one?

Tabatha: So, I would flip it around. I think you need to make the journey from your heart to your head. Mindsets change. We have now found through numerous incredible studies, through neurologists and neuroplasticity, that our brain chemistry does actually change. So, where we thought that it was static for a long time, we have now found that neural pathways open up all the time, that neuroplasticity and our brain's elasticity does actually change and grow and that is all our mindset. I believe the journey is from your heart to your head because our head is the place where we have the Gremlins live, we have those monsters live. You're talking about slaying dragons, that's where they live, where they tell you, "You aren't good enough. You can't do this because people will laugh at you, will judge you," where the fear comes from. And we live inside our heads too much. I believe we should... If we lived inside our hearts more and actually listened to our hearts more, it would help redirect our brain maybe a little quicker and a little easier for the people that are having a hard time.

Shawn: I am totally thinking through that one. And really appreciate your perspective on that. It is a hard journey, whether you go from your head to your heart or your heart to your head. So, thank you for sharing on that one. Tabatha, you and I, the reason I reached out to you is I actually heard you speak in a room on Clubhouse, which is a whole new social media platform that's happening to take over the world, I feel like. And I've heard you give some amazing advice there around all of this. So, what is the one thing you would want our listeners to take away from your story and what you have shared with us today on this podcast?

Tabatha: I think the one thing I would like everyone to take away is to question those doubts, whatever they are, however, they pop up. Fear, self-doubt, not feeling like you're worthy enough or you can do something, and question it and unpack it, and do it anyway. Follow your heart, lean into what lights you up and brings you joy, lean into what scares you a little bit. If it's really scary and it's a big dream, that's great. Lean into that and have the courage to move forward. even a baby step. to get you closer to seeing what your potential is, and living as authentically as you can.

Shawn: I love it. In January, I got these three words: to reset, restore, and rebuild. And I had no idea the path that that was going to take me on and take our company on. And your inspiration today and what you shared with us just helps to know that it's okay to have fear, it's okay to lean into it, but kiss it. And what I love so much is it's not about killing it, but it's about embracing it. And I so thank you for sharing that with us.

So, Tabatha, we've come to this point in the podcast where we do three questions. And they're called "The Combustion Questions." I'm gonna read a question and I just need you to answer it from your gut and from that very first response. So, are you ready for this, Tabatha?

Tabatha: I am ready!

Shawn: All right. So, your first Combustion Question is, if you could be a professional musician in an orchestra, which instrument would you like to play?

Tabatha: Violin. First thing that popped into mind, I just think it is amazing. A violin played really well is incredibly beautiful and can make you cry, and a bad one is like a cat screaming in an alleyway. So...

Shawn: And can make you cry too.

Tabatha: And can make you cry. Totally.

Shawn: Awesome. Combustion Question number two. What's your favorite cookie and why?

Tabatha: I'm gluten-free. So, it's hard to get great cookies because I am gluten-free, but I make a really mean zucchini chocolate chip gluten-free vegan cookies. So, that's my favorite.

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Shawn: You may have to send that recipe. I'm trying to be healthier in my life. So, any of those things help, and cutting the sugar out has been one of them. All right. Your third Combustion Question is, what do you think about garden hoses?

Tabatha: I think they're really annoying because doesn't matter how much money I spend on them, they always crack and break.

Shawn: I love it and I absolutely agree with you. Not knowing that that was your question, I spent half an hour last night trying to wind up a garden hose and it ended up cracking in the whole process. So, I 100% agree with you. Well, Tabatha, thank you so much for being on with us and sharing your story. And I hope that we can do this many more times and share. So, thank you. Stay safe and be well.

Tabatha: Thank you. You too. Thanks for having me.

Shawn: Thank you so much for listening to this episode of *The Combustion Chronicles*.

None of this would be possible without you, the listener. If you'd like to keep the conversation going, look up me up on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and at ShawnNason.com. Or if you're on Clubhouse, find me there. Give me a shout and join our disruption movement.

And be sure to check out my new book, *Kiss Your Dragons: Radical Relationships, Bold Heartsets, and Changing the World*, available now at Amazon. Yeah, most people think you ought to slay dragons, but to really soar you have to make friends with them--and even kiss them.

Finally, check out this episode's downloadable recap page at ShawnNason.com. We know you lead busy life, so if you're driving, exercising, or maybe you're just blowing your own shit up, don't worry. We've already taken the notes for you. Each recap page is filled with exclusive guest information, episode themes, quotes, resources, and more.

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Stay safe and be well.