

## Ep #356: My Coach, Trudi Lebron



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Brooke Castillo**

## Ep #356: My Coach, Trudi Lebron

You are listening to *The Life Coach School Podcast* with Brooke Castillo, episode number 356.

Welcome to *The Life Coach School Podcast*, where it's all about real clients, real problems and real coaching. And now your host, Master Coach Instructor, Brooke Castillo.

Brooke: Hello my friends. Welcome to the podcast.

Trudi: Thank you.

Brooke: Listen, I'm not talking to you yet. That's so funny. I just had one of my friends call on too, and she's like, "But I'm your friend."

Trudi: I know, that's who I thought you were talking to. I'll shut up.

Brooke: I always have Pavel just leave it all in because it's so fun. I have a special guest today, in case y'all didn't know. In case we didn't already give that away. My coach Trudi Lebron is on here today and she's going to talk about what it's like to coach me a little bit later on this show.

First of all, welcome to the podcast my friend. I'm so happy that you're here. I'm so excited to talk about all the things. Let's start with you telling us a little bit about you.

Trudi: Alright, oh man, where do we start?

Brooke: Start at the beginning.

Trudi: So I am a coach. A diversity, equity, and inclusion coach. I specialize in working with businesses, large and small, mostly in the coaching and personal development industry these days. I started doing that work a very long time ago.

Brooke: How long ago? How did you get into it? Tell us.

Trudi: Oh man, I started - formally, I started doing diversity, equity, and inclusion work in 2008. And so I say 2008 because that's when I took an

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official training and became a national trainer for an agency. But before that, I was doing youth services. I was working in non-profits doing youth service work, which involved a lot of looking at inequities and systemic issues, working with students in schools who were like, overage, under-credit, helping people get back on track. So yeah, I've been doing this work for a really long time.

Brooke: Did you have like a moment where you can remember thinking like, oh yeah, this is important work I want to do? Or was it just kind of a gradual this is who I am?

Trudi: I think it was more gradual. Definitely more of an evolution. I think that it came from my own life as someone growing up biracial, as someone who was a teen mom, who faced a whole bunch of systemic issues, who saw a really stark contrast between the ways that I was treated and the ways that other people were treated, the fight that I had to kind of put forth to get certain things, to get access to certain things.

And then over time, I saw that I had certain abilities, certain patience, certain mindset that allowed me to do things like go to college and finish college and get a Master's degree and do all these things that were really, really hard that so many times I just wanted to throw in the towel.

But I saw that things were possible, and because I had that combination of personality and discipline and dreams and all of these things, I wanted to try to make it a little bit easier for other people to be able to accomplish their dreams. So that's kind of how it all unfolded.

Brooke: Got it. And so when did you actually start your own company?

Trudi: I was always side hustling. I'll say that first because I was a teen mom. So I always needed some extra cash. And so I started doing that. Actually, as a teaching artist. I taught theatre. My Bachelor's degree is in theatre.

Brooke: Oh, nice.

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Trudi: So I have always, even when I had a job when I was 19 years old, I would always be teaching theatre on the side. So I was always used to the hustle. And then when I was working in non-profit and making \$35,000, \$40,000 a year, I was like, this still is not - this is not enough. I don't know how I'm supposed to do this.

By that time, I had some more professional skills and I was able to go into - because I was used to that hustle, I was able to say to people, "Well, I can train you on how to do that." So I started doing professional training for youth services. I did a lot of teacher training, a lot of training for social workers and people who work with kids as a hustle.

And eventually over time, the hustle became more and more, and I was like, wait a minute. I can make how much money going in for the day? Because what happened was, I was in non-profit leadership so I started to become the person who was hiring the outside consultants.

I was like, wait a minute, these people are charging what to come in here to give these mediocre trainings? No way. I'm going to figure out how to do this. So then in 2013 I actually incorporated my business.

Brooke: Okay. And you've been running your own company as the CEO since then?

Trudi: Yeah. So it was kind of part-time for a while, and then it was like I had full-time jobs for a while, and then the end of 2016 I resigned from my job.

Brooke: Wow, okay. And then...

Trudi: And I'm in full-time self-employed CEO ever since.

Brooke: Doing very well. Can we talk about how well?

Trudi: Sure.

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Brooke: So when I first met Trudi, you guys know, I love talking about the moneys all the time. And so when I first met Trudi, I was asking her about her business. First, I'm like, "Hi, I'm Brooke Castillo, what's your revenue?" I always go right into it.

So we had talked about obviously I always want to know when someone hits seven figures. So I was cheering for Trudi, and then she just told me the other day that her business got to seven figures, which is extraordinary. And I think when you look at the stats, which I love to do, I love to go look at women-owned businesses, independent women-owned businesses, like our businesses, and see how many women are actually making seven figures in their business.

It's such a small percentage. And I think it's just a testament to the amount of work and commitment and belief that we have to have in ourselves in order to succeed. So congratulations.

Trudi: Thank you. I'm used to being in the small percent of people. It's weird. I remember having a meltdown a couple years ago because I had made - I remember getting to May of a year and making \$250,000. And this was a couple years ago, and totally melting down and being like, what am I supposed to do with myself? It was just too much. Because up until then it was like, barely, just kind of scratching the surface of six figures, which was - for someone who was on welfare, it's just incredible to think about.

Brooke: So I would actually like to talk about that if you're game. You had referenced you're a teen mom and you felt like you were experiencing inequity in your own life going through that as a biracial woman. Can you talk a little bit about what that was like?

Trudi: Yeah. I mean, it was rough, man. What I learned in that experience, from the time that I was probably 18 to the time that I was 24, I was really poor. We didn't have a lot of money growing up anyway, but once I stepped out of my parent - my mom's home, and got my own apartment, I was trying to raise my kids. I was really, really broke.

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Brooke: So how old were you when you had when your first kid?

Trudi: I had my first son when I was 15 and then I had my second son when I was 16.

Brooke: Okay, got it. So when you were 18, you had two kids under the age of two.

Trudi: Yeah. So by the time - I'm 18 years old, 19 years old, I'm getting public assistance, I'm getting food stamps, I finally get an apartment, I had a housing subsidy, I was making probably \$11 an hour working in after school programs and I'm in college.

And thankfully I had supportive parents, but I definitely remember calling my dad and being like, "We don't have groceries. Can you please bring me some food?" I remember times when our lights were off, we didn't have gas, I was boiling water to wash the kids, bathe them.

And that was - I mean, it feels like a lifetime ago but it was a long time ago but it's not that long ago. I still remember what that felt like. So to be a couple years ago, being like, oh crap, I made \$250,000 mid-year, I don't even know how to handle this. I don't know what to do. I can't even take more clients, I don't know what to do next.

Brooke: How do you explain your trajectory? Because if you look at just the way you described your life, it just seems like how did you get from there to here?

Trudi: Yeah. So there's a couple things. I am super stubborn. And I wasn't going to let what the statistics said I should be like, be the thing that I adopted. I wasn't going to - I knew the statistics. I knew there was less than a 1% chance that I would even get a Bachelor's degree before the time I was 30 years old.

So I just wasn't going to adopt this narrative that I'm going to be broke forever. So I did whatever I could to not behave that way. And that's tricky. I

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remember this moment where I was having a conversation with a friend, both of us have a housing subsidy. And we're having this conversation about taking these jobs.

And I was like, I'm taking this job, I'm going to take this full-time job and I'm actually going to let go of my housing subsidy. I'm going to tell them that I don't want it anymore, which was a huge risk. But my friend was in a similar position and what she chose was to not take a job offer because if she took that job, she would lose her housing subsidy because it was just right outside of the gap.

And we had done the math. Both of us had done the math. And saw that if she took that job, she lost her housing subsidy, she'd actually be more broke because she'd now have to pay all her rent and she wouldn't have the money that she needed to take care of her family.

Brooke: Right. Plus, she's working full-time, right? If she takes the job.

Trudi: Right. So both of us are in a very similar position but we make two radically different choices. And who knows what could have happened, but I bet on myself and bet on the education that I had, I bet on my hustle, and I said I'm going to let go of the housing subsidy because in the worst-case scenario, I'm just going to have to take another job and figure out how to pay my rent. And I'm willing to take that risk.

My friend wasn't willing to take that risk, and that gets to be her choice. Like I didn't have - I wasn't trying to talk her out of it. I totally understood where she was coming from. But it's that kind of decision-making that got me - I think that got me to where I am.

Brooke: For sure. Because the reason why you did that, do you remember what the thought was?

Trudi: Yeah, because I didn't want to be there as a trap in that poverty of I'm going to hang on to this subsidy. It's almost like you're saying, for me, not you, but for me, it would be almost like I'm saying this is the best I could

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do. And I just wasn't willing to do that. I had way big dreams. I had dream of running a business and having lots of money and traveling the world. I didn't know how I was going to do that, no one in my family had that kind of life, but I don't know, it was just in me.

Brooke: That's so interesting because I had a very different childhood than you did. The way that I was raised. But similar dreams and similar thoughts. And I wanted to work. I always tried to figure out like, where did those dreams come from?

Because I was the same way. I was like, I want to make a lot of money and I want to travel the world. And my experience was very different because I was born into and raised with money, which most people will think oh, you have money, then it's easy for you to be successful. But it's a whole different weirder mind trip for me because I didn't have to do that. And yet I still had those dreams. So tell me what it's like for you. I'll tell you what it's like for me too. Now that you're kind of living your dream, right?

Trudi: Yeah, in a lot of ways, yeah.

Brooke: How does the experience you had inform your work now?

Trudi: Well, it's weird. It's really weird because there's two things that come to mind when you say that. I am constantly kind of battling this where I am and where I've been. And what it means to have some money, live in the kind of house that I live in, live in the neighborhood I live in, be able to raise my youngest child the way that he's being raised, versus what I thought about those things when I was broke. And what is perpetuated about those things.

And so sometimes I feel like I've lost certain relationships. There's also this thing, and I'm doing a lot of thinking about this because I'm also an academic. So I'm also thinking about this loss of community and what it means when you start to be in a different social class and what other people think of you and the kind of loss in relationships and what that



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means. And then feeling like you don't fit in the new place either. So there's a lot of stuff, there's a lot of mindset stuff.

Brooke: Yeah, I mean, let's talk about it for a minute because I think it's important. One of the most interesting things that came out of my discussions with a lot of my Black students was that exact thing, is their fear of kind of leaving people behind and leaving communities.

And I think some of this is perceived, some of it is very real, where it's like, who do you think you are? You're acting so white now is what they would hear, and then they also told me if they get too successful, they feel like they don't have as many mate options within their own race or even outside of their race because of the financial difference.

And for me, as a coach who really - especially as a coach for women who really wants to help women be financially successful because of the freedom that it gives us and the power that it gives us, I feel really frustrated by that.

Trudi: Yeah, I totally hear that. I think that there's a connection, like a bond that forms around struggle. And so when you don't struggle anymore, or when your struggles are very different, you can lose that bond. So that's just something I'm doing a lot of thinking about these days to understand the truth of that, how much of that is perceived, how much of it is real, and what are the boundaries to it. I'm very fascinated by that these days.

Brooke: Yeah. I love that you're thinking about that. I think it's so important to question the "everybody." This is what everybody thinks. It's like, who exactly is the everybody? It's like, your mother and your best friend from high school, right?

But we get these mindsets in our own mind that can hold us back. But then also dealing with - for me, I'm dealing with the insane success that I've had and what it means to me and to all the people that I'm teaching and all the people that haven't had the same opportunity that I've had to have this type

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of success, which brings me around to how I met you and our work together, which I would love to talk more about.

We were just laughing, you and I. First of all, I just have to tell you that coaching me is not easy and Trudi's been my coach. And I will say, I'm open to coaching and I want to always explore myself, but I need to argue for a while first.

Trudi: Yeah, I would say that's true.

Brooke: But I feel like you've held the space for me to kind of argue ideas and belief systems that I've had, and just - it's just been so enlightening working with you and seeing all the things that I had not seen. To get to 48 years old and to think that I'm a very well educated, well-informed, inclusive, sophisticated woman who loves all people and to be shown that maybe that wasn't the case was excruciatingly painful.

And I feel like you as a coach just did such a beautiful job in helping me learn so much over these past six months. And what I was going to say is I was laughing earlier because where we started was my first introduction to you was a sales page you had, which you didn't tell me exactly what the copy was but it was basically like, a class for white people.

Trudi: It was. It was like a workshop for white coaches.

Brooke: White coaches, yeah. It was called a workshop for white - I'm like, what in the hell is this lady even talking about? Calling us out as white. I was like, this is crazy. And now I've just come so far in understanding what I didn't understand for so long.

And just speaking to that briefly, for me - and we've done a lot of trainings with Trudi and her team, and I'd like to talk about this because we had a conversation about it recently and I think a lot of white people have this same kind of thought. And we were talking about how when we're raised, we're taught that we're all just one.

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We're all just one human race. And we shouldn't look at other people differently, and we should look at everyone as the same. And a lot of us were raised thinking that was a great way to think and that was an altruistic and inclusive way to think in my mind. So when I see a sales page that says for white people, I feel like it's the opposite of what I learned. I feel like that's very divisive and I was really turned off by that initially. And I don't think I'm alone.

And you were saying someone reached out to you recently from one of the classes you taught within our Self-Coaching Scholars and said stop calling people white folks or something, right?

Trudi: Yeah.

Brooke: So could you speak to that just a little bit? Maybe there are some people that are in the same place I was a few months ago and not understanding that.

Trudi: Yeah, I think it's really true that lots of folks, especially white folks, grow up learning exactly what you just described. And I certainly remember being in school in the 80s and being told that we're all the same and treat everybody the same and we don't see color. Yeah, I get that.

But there's a very different type of teaching, it's a very different contrast between that kind of direct explicit teaching, and then the implicit teaching behaviorally and the way that we see people treating each other and what we see on the news. And people don't want to talk about that, but that is being taught.

So what we need to do is be able to see the way that people are different, the way that people have been treated different, the way that opportunities have been available differently if we're ever going to fix it. It's like we can't fix a problem that we're not talking about, or that we're not seeing. So we need to be able to name it, we need to see it, and then we can start to begin the journey of unlearning and repair. But we have to be able to name those things.

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The other thing that's really different for white folks is that they haven't, until very recently, they're not used to being racialized as being white. They're used to being just people. White people are just people and everybody else are Black, brown, Asian, Latino, but especially in the American context, white people are just people.

So that's why for someone hear me say white folks in a training, it is, it's like, what do you mean? Me? No. There's this instinct to want to say well, to distance themselves from a particular type of white, but that's not how things work. We don't see people saying well, there's one kind of Latin person and another kind of Latin person, or one kind of Black person. We need to not make it about ourselves and we need to be able to just understand the world the way it is.

Brooke: Yeah. I think it's one of the most profound but simple insights that I had initially was when I pulled my students together and just said tell me what I'm missing, talk to me about this. And for me to be like, I don't see you as Black, I don't see you as Black and me as white, and they're like, yeah, that's the problem.

And I was like, what? What do you mean? It was so shocking to me. And the more I talked to them, the more I understood that when we acknowledge different races have different experiences because of the color of their skin, then you're able to be much more understanding, inclusive, connected to people by understanding their experience, instead of assuming that we're all one person and we have the same experience.

Trudi: Right. And my position is especially in the reason - one of the reasons I love working with coaches is that acknowledging those differences makes us better coaches. It can make us more effective in the way that we offer support, and therefor the impact of the transformation is better.

So to me, that's the most - not the most important, but one of the most important things for coaches to really understand that doing this kind of

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work, the work that you're engaged in, that your team is engaged in actually makes you a better coach.

Brooke: Yeah. And I think that for many of us, white people, we want to come to this work and be like, just so you're clear, I love all the people. I love Black people; I love Latin people. And we do really believe that. We don't believe we're racist. We do believe that there's crazy racist people and then there's us and we're just normal white people, we're the innocent white people, right?

And so I think that for me, what you did for me as my coach is understood where I was coming from, understood that I was raised in my own fishbowl of seeing that and believing that and thinking that was good, and showing me what I couldn't see in a way that wasn't shaming or demeaning to me, even though it very easily could have been because of what I was completely missing, with a layer of - I don't know if arrogance is the right word, but just complete obliviousness. Just not understanding it.

And so I feel like this work is exactly what you've said. It's just made me a better human, it's made me a better coach, it's made me more aware, it's made the world actually much more interesting.

Trudi: Yeah, it's funny. We get people who come into our programs, we work with entrepreneurs. It's a business-focused program. And what we tell people is that I feel like I'm always giving this disclaimer of you're going to do this work and you're going to be a different person afterwards. It's not just going to impact your business. It's going to impact your relationships with your family potentially, your friends. Understand that this is an all-in kind of thing.

Brooke: There's a couple things I want to say. I want to talk about this just because - so my boyfriend's Indian. He has really dark skin. And we were out to dinner with my girlfriend and her boyfriend and his son. And his son is half Filipino and half Black. And he said to my boyfriend, "You look foreign. Where are you from?"

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And it was just crazy to me now. Whereas before I think I would have been like, yeah. But now like, what just happened? What is actually going on? And from my boyfriend's perspective, he's just used to it. He's like, yeah, yeah. And I'm like, that is not something anyone should be used to.

But you're not from this country because you have dark skin was really - and this was coming from a Black man, which I thought was fascinating. The whole thing was so fascinating. And he just kind of laughed it off and was like, well, I'm Indian but I'm American, and trying to explain that in a way.

It's just made me more aware of how oblivious so many of us are too, in terms of those kinds of conversations. So just for the sake of a learning opportunity here, can we talk about that?

Trudi: Yeah. So that's called a micro aggression, although there's a lot of people who - lot of work being done to step away from the micro part of that and just...

Brooke: Just call it an aggression.

Trudi: And the reason for that is because although, as you tell that story, someone listening might be like, oh, that seems like a normal question, no big deal, but imagine getting that question every day or some version of that question every day.

The psychological effect of micro aggressions takes real psychological and physical tolls on people. There are just so many studies that talk about the effects of weathering and what it is to be in a scenario where you're getting those kinds of comments that are reflecting the sentiment that you don't belong here, or you're not from here, you are different, you are other.

Over time, that takes a major toll on someone's overall wellbeing. That just needs to stop. There are so many better things to talk about. There are so many other better ways to get to know someone.

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Brooke: Right. And in that situation, it's a micro aggression and here's the other piece I want to talk about is this man who asked this question of my boyfriend in no way intended to be aggressive. And so I think a lot of times we think, "Oh, he didn't mean it that way," so therefore it's okay.

Trudi: So what we've done in, again, especially here in the American context, what we've done is we've normalized these questions and we've kind of couched it under this umbrella of I'm getting to know someone. And what's really happening is we're categorizing people. Questions like what do you do? Especially people you don't know. What do you do? Where are you from? No really, where are you from? That kind of...

Brooke: Where are you from originally?

Trudi: Yeah. Where are your parents from? All of those - I have a close friend who's Filipino and I remember going out with her and people being like, oh, where are you from? And she'd be like, Chicago. And they'd be like, no really. And she'd be like, no really, that's where I'm from. And just watching people get frustrated, like they're entitled to this answer.

Here's what I want to offer people to think about for a minute. What if they don't want to tell you? What if there's a reason? Because I'm going to use this expression, we don't know what kind of white person you are. If a white person asked that question, we don't know what kind of white person you are.

So imagine being in an Uber and you get that - someone who is not a white person, maybe has an accent, maybe looks different gets that question. They don't know anything about you. You might be racist, you might be a white supremacist, you might have really strong feelings about whatever country of origin this person is from.

They might not want to share where they are from for a variety of reasons, and you're not entitled to an answer. So it's just not the best. Again, there are just so many better ways, if you really want to form a connection to people, there's just so many better ways.

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Brooke: So just so we can offer this to people, in that situation, is it just much more appropriate not even to bring up race?

Trudi: Yeah. I don't think you need to. What if someone said to you, what race are you? Where are you from? No really, Brooke. Those questions are not comfortable for anyone. It just is like, again, especially if they're strangers. Just oh, do you drive Uber often? Do you live in this city? There are so many other things that we can say. Did you grow up here? That's a good...

Brooke: So fascinating, right? Because I think that when we're oblivious, there's no harm. I'm just interested in you, right? And this is an appropriate thing to be interested about. But when you ask it of me, as a white person, it seems like an odd question. Like where are you from, in terms of what country are you from. We're not talking about what state are you from, which is what as a white person, I would assume you were asking me. I would never think you were asking what country am I from. I mean, obviously.

And I think when we think oh, obviously I'm white, I'm from here, which none of us are originally from here, so it's just so fascinating to think about it that way, right? Okay, so I have some other things that I learned that I kind of wanted to share with everyone and kind of share as a business owner, and so I'm hoping you can speak to this.

So one of the things that I came to Trudi with that I was concerned about is we were talking a lot about inclusion and diversity and equity. And when you look at my team of employees, it's all women. So I have 12 total employees, including myself. It's all women and one man.

And I came to Trudi and I said that's not very diverse. It's a lot of women especially and is that okay, was basically what I was saying. Because my approach had always been like, I want to put a dent in this wage gap. And one of the ways that I can do that, my small way of doing that is hiring a



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bunch of women and paying them a lot of money, and that's my way of doing it.

And so I had asked you, hey, is that okay for me to hire just women, even though I'm not diverse within my company? Am I creating more diversity in the world? And I would love for you to share what you said to me.

Trudi: Yeah. So there's two parts to that. One is yes, you are. Creating equity doesn't happen on a one-to-one scale. We can look at your business and create an equitable business. There are things we can do. But then there is this larger context and you have this goal, this value of hiring women. One of your issues, your commitments is around the wage gap, so you're fulfilling your commitment.

We always tell people that's where you start. You start with your values and commitments, make sure your behaviors, your actions are in alignment with those things, and then we look within that. Things like equity, diversity, inclusion to make sure that you're being as equitable as you can, being as inclusive as you can, thinking about who's at the margins within your company.

So that's the other thing. You can choose. And this is a question I get from so many business owners who say, "Well, I serve women, or I serve men, or I serve heterosexual couples," or whatever it is, does creating diversity mean that I now have to go and serve all these people? Or I serve six and seven-figure business owners, like...

Brooke: Yeah, this was the question I asked you, right? Is - I'm like, I spend all this time telling everyone to niche down and you're telling me to be inclusive. Those seem like they're in contrast.

Trudi: They seem like they're in conflict but they are not in conflict. No, they're totally not. What you need to be able to do is within your niche, within the scope of your work, you're looking within that population to say what is the diversity within that population. Who is at the margins? Who is underrepresented within my niche, within my target audience, within

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whatever, however you call it. And then you start to look and say how do we do better? Within our target, how do we create more representation? So those two things are not in conflict.

Brooke: Yeah, that was really helpful. And the other thing that came up for me when we were talking is that I have white women. I have 11 women and they're all white. And what I had said to you is like, listen, I want to hire Black women, I want to hire Latino women. They're not applying. I don't know what to tell you.

And you said well, I know what to tell you. And this was really so fascinating to me is it hadn't occurred to me that I wasn't advertising my jobs in a way that was inclusive. I just thought people aren't applying, I can't help that. You got to apply for the job if you want it. Hello, like why aren't you applying?

And realizing how much of how I was running my company and running ads and talking and showing up in the world was deterring other women, marginalized women from applying to work with me.

Trudi: Right. Our commitment to inclusivity, to equity, to wanting to create equity in the world can't just be ideological. It can't be something that's just about what we think or what we believe and what's in our heart. That does not translate into action.

We need to be able to have the policies and the practices in place that support our values, that support our commitments to that we're - not just messaging to the world that this is a space for you, but that you have the internal capacity to have them be successful once they arrive.

One of the things we see across industries that prioritize diversity only, that's why you'll really never hear me say just diversity because if you just prioritize diversity, then you end up with a diverse company and we see, again, across industries, that the highest turnover rates are for the people of color, the Black and brown folks who work in a company there. They'll

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come in but they'll leave because the space wasn't prepared for them, wasn't set up for success.

There are things that you have to do differently. There's a way that you have to - you have to create a culture that's just as inclusive as, or that supports the kind of inclusivity that is in your heart.

Brooke: And I think if you would have asked me, I would have said absolutely. Absolutely, anyone can come and work here. I have my arms open and we are ready, come on it. I had no idea that I wasn't ready for that and that my company wasn't prepared for that, and that I wasn't creating a space, even for the applicants to feel like this was an opportunity that maybe they should consider.

And this was something that I really learned before I hired my CEO, Erika Royal. Now, getting feedback from her and talking to her, she would have never applied for that job, even though she's the perfect candidate. So not only does it create a situation that doesn't benefit the people that would love to work in my organization. I'm screwing myself over.

Trudi: Yeah, absolutely.

Brooke: And missing those opportunities. So what can we do as business owners who think that we're being welcoming in our job recs, what can we do better in order to create that? And like you said, it's not just hey, we welcome all races.

Trudi: The equal opportunity message at the bottom of your page.

Brooke: It starts with an organization that people can have some longevity in first.

Trudi: Well, it starts with the leadership. You remember when we started working together, before I spoke to anyone on your team, I was like, we got to have some sessions first. Just you and me. Because I needed to make

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sure that you - the way that I describe it, the expression that I use is that you can hold the responsibility of the work.

Because I can talk to your team, and some people do this. Again, I worked in non-profits, I worked with school districts. Not just the school but a whole district. And the superintendent wouldn't participate in the meetings, didn't want to be involved, and the work - nothing ever got done because nobody had power to make really bold decisions and the leadership wasn't prepared to hold the responsibility of the work.

So the place that people need to start is by doing the kind of work that you were talking about at first, that kind of internal stuff, understanding where you're at on your journey, unpacking some of your own identity stuff, looking at some of the biases and blind spots that you might have. Then starting to look at the culture and the business. Then you start looking at okay, what do we do next?

And you know, some of the things that we help people do is look at how they build their job descriptions, look at how they talk about their company, look at what the application process is. Because it's not just that you're trying to bring in more Black and brown candidates. It's that the white candidates that you're bringing in too have to be with the program. You have to ensure that they are going to fit into this culture.

Brooke: That they're going to share the values of being inclusive and having diversity and understand. Yes, absolutely.

Trudi: I call this putting the elevator in your business. So this is the expression of - the reason that we have elevators in buildings, in commercial buildings, you have to have an elevator if you have more than one floor is so that people who cannot take the stairs because of whatever physical limitation they have to go up and down stairs, they can get to where they need to get to.

But everyone takes the elevator. The experience for everyone improves because you have the elevator in your building. So when you take on the

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task of really creating more inclusivity, more equity, prioritizing anti-racism, everybody benefits. The experience for everyone improves.

Brooke: Yeah. I had this experience when we were preparing the LGBTQ class in Self-Coaching Scholars and listening to the experiences of those men and women and people in that group talking to me about what it's like to sit in an audience with me or listen to my podcast.

And one of the things that happened after I kind of got that education is I felt so much smarter and more knowledgeable and more understanding and more caring and compassionate. It just increased who I am as a human, which was so unexpected.

And I think this is probably what a lot of people who have resisted this work are afraid of is that they will feel less than when they start understanding their own racism, their own bias, what they've been missing, that they will end up feeling less human and beat themselves up more. And I've had the opposite experience.

I've had this experience of feeling like - forgiving myself that I hadn't understood what I didn't understand, but now I've opened myself up to understanding. It has made me feel more - really just more compassionate towards myself and others. And so for anyone considering doing this work, I want to offer that. Because it's hard work. It's not easy. Coaching work looking at yourself is tough, but we do this work so we can evolve and become that better version of themselves.

And it's not to beat yourself up or have a political identity shift or anything like that. It's really about just understanding yourself in the world that you're living in.

Trudi: I will actually take this opportunity to say that's what it's supposed to be. Unfortunately, there are some people who do work around diversity and anti-racism who use shame as a tool, who go about the work in a way that leaves people feeling less than and dehumanized. It shouldn't feel like that.

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It doesn't need to be that way. Those aren't effective transformation techniques.

Brooke: Right. Because I feel like that type of work makes us shut down and hide more than open ourselves up. So I mean, I feel like you and your team does this work in a way that's really in line with my company's values and the way that we want to learn.

We have a lot of students that come into our organization and share their deepest darkest secrets, so we want to be able to be in the space of holding space for that, and I think you've done such a beautiful job of that with me and my team. And we've brought it all to you.

Trudi: And we thank you and everyone we work with. We really feel a deep sense of honor when we get to work with people because we recognize that this is some of the most sensitive stuff. We're talking about the very nature of a person, of a person's identity. And things that they've been taught that they didn't even realize that they were taught becomes such integral parts of who they are.

And for them to show up in calls with us and share those things and to be taken through a journey to release some of those things, that's some of the most sensitive work that can be done. And so we just really honor all of those kinds of relationships that we have with the people that we work with, and the people that follow me on Instagram and are in the work.

Brooke: Yeah. So one of the other things that we've done a lot - I've cried with you a lot but also laughed with you a lot. And I feel like listen, we are all a hot mess in so many ways, and when we're willing to look at it and even laugh at it and evolve ourselves, I just think there's nothing better.

So before we wrap this up, I do want to give people the opportunity if they want to have the pleasure of working with you and your organization. I know that you have different programs that maybe someone that doesn't have a large organization like mine isn't going to hire you and your team

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the way I have. But there's other ways that they can work with you. So I'd love for you to talk about that a little bit.

Trudi: Yeah. Most of the people that we work with come into either our membership, The Equity-Centered Coaching Collective, and that's kind of a guided learning container, especially for people who are newer to the journey and are just trying to get their feet wet a little bit, become familiar with the concepts and want a community of people who are doing this and want to get some feedback. That's where a lot of people start.

And then also in our Amplified Impact Mastermind, which is a six-month program. It's a pretty intensive six months. But those are people who maybe have a little bit more experience, but really want to deepen their work at looking at both how they build a business and do the diversity, equity, and inclusion work side by side.

Because the thing that I'm always telling people is that you're not choosing between doing good and doing business. I'm all about make all the money, let's build the business, but let's make sure that your structures are equitable, are inclusive, are reflecting your values and you can do those things at the same time.

There's this myth that you have to go and get successful first and make some money, and then you can worry about impact. And we just don't believe that. You can do those things at the same time.

Brooke: Yes, absolutely. So in your membership program, is that appropriate for someone who's not even sure the proper terminology, or how...

Trudi: Yeah.

Brooke: Okay. Like basic questions, I'm freaked out, I don't even want to talk to Black people right now because I'm so afraid I'll say the wrong thing, that kind of energy that I think people are very ashamed.

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Trudi: Yeah. So our community is a mixed base. There are people of all backgrounds in our community. But what we do is we actually offer for people who really want this support to work some of those things out, we offer these community calls and we have community calls for just white people. Like the workshop that we have for white coaches.

It's called Unpacking Whiteness, and it's only our white clients come to those calls and they talk about these things. And then we have other calls that are - we actually call it the BIPOC Peace Lounge. So Black, brown, indigenous people of color, where they get to come and talk about what it's like to be in their body, running their business, and the intersections. And they don't want to do that in front of other white folks. So we are an inclusive community, but we provide equitable support by being able to pull people out and say let us give you what you need.

Brooke: Let's talk just a minute about that because I think it's important and I've gotten a lot of feedback when I do separate groups. I have gotten a lot of feedback like, that's divisive, why are you doing that? And there's really good reasons to do that, and I would just love for you to briefly speak to that.

Trudi: So those are called affinity groups. Those are a practice in diversity, equity, and inclusion work, in community organizing work for years. It is not new. It is not what people are just making up. This is a tested strategy. And the reason for that is because sometimes people aren't going to say certain things if they feel like either they're going to offend someone else or that someone is watching and critiquing what they say.

And so sometimes having pulling people apart - and you know, we do this with women only clubs and men only clubs and LGBT associations. This is a thing. You're in community with other people who share certain identities, and it's so that you can just be and say the things that need to be said.

Now, the problem that happens and the reason it makes people uncomfortable is because if those things happen in isolation, so for



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example, the idea of a bunch of white folks coming together to talk about being white, that could be a little nerve-wracking to people because you don't - you're not white, you don't know what is going to come up and what's going to come in that space.

But if you're doing it under the - one of the best practices to do it under the guidance of someone of a mixed group. So you're working with a coach, or you have a colleague, you're thinking through what's happening in those groups, what's the purpose. It's not random. It's not just like let's bring a bunch of white folks together. There's intentionality behind it. So it should be done with a lot of intention, I'll just say that.

Brooke: And I think it's important, it's made such a huge difference to be able to like - the way I describe it is put all the ugly out there. Like here's what I'm thinking, here are my thoughts, is this wrong? Is this bad? And just being able to say it in front of someone who's trained and who can give me feedback in a very honest and caring way and not have other people that don't need to be hearing that. They have to hear it too much in their regular life all the time. That's not an appropriate place for me to be doing that.

So I think that for anyone who doesn't understand that, I think it's an important awareness to come to when you're trying to understand this work. And if you don't understand any of this, listen, I get it. I totally get it. I was completely oblivious to this work too, but it has been really profound and awesome for me to go through this experience.

So I want to invite anyone who's maybe - especially if you've been hesitant and afraid and hiding and not wanting to expose yourself to any call outs or ridicule or whatever, there are places where you can go. Trudi's organization is one of them, where you can explore all of this and feel more confident in your own understanding of yourself, if for nothing else. So can you just say your URL quickly? Because they can find out about the membership at your URL and everything.

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Trudi: Totally. Yeah, so anyone can just come to [trudilebron.com](http://trudilebron.com). And I'm also on Instagram @trudilebron.

Brooke: Perfect. And I will be sharing the work that I'm doing. I'm working with Trudi ongoing, so as my knowledge changes and my organization changes, all of you who are building your own organizations and doing this work yourself I know have been really interested in what I've been doing and what I've been learning. So I will be continuously sharing all of that as well. Anything else you want the people to know?

Trudi: I just want to remind people, I love reminding people that this is uncomfortable work. Maybe just listening to this episode was uncomfortable at times. But I promise that growth and transformation is on the other side of that.

Brooke: 100%. Thank you so much Trudi for everything. Thank you for being my coach, thank you for...

Trudi: Thank you for trusting me and having me on.

Brooke: Coaching my team. And if you want to see us, we did record this on video. So hopefully is that okay with you?

Trudi: Yeah.

Brooke: You get to see us talking. We've been recording the videos on these podcasts where I have guests. So if you'd rather watch it than listen to it, you can go to the [lifecoachschool.com/356](http://lifecoachschool.com/356). Have an amazing week everybody. Thank you, Trudi.

Trudi: You're welcome.

Brooke: Bye.

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