



## Episode 9

### **It Starts in Your Hearts**

Good morning. This is Toni Julian, and I'm the host of Toni Talks, Humanity Matters. Well, today couldn't be a better day to talk about humanity matters because that is absolutely what's weighing on my heart, as it is, I'm sure it is with you as well. Recently, we've been through COVID-19. We're going through financial, economic, harsh times with the unemployment rate in the United States being around 20% as we are trying to rebound and get through this COVID-19 situation. And now we have some brutality, some mistreatment of some of our brothers and sisters. And today, it's just weighing very much on my heart because we have to end this; like what is it going to take for us to get through this? What is it going to take for us to open our hearts and be not just talking tolerant, but loving and accepting of all of our brothers and sisters on this earth? What is it going to take?

I just finished watching Eddie Garcia. He's the Chief of Police in San Jose, doing a video and I really loved it. And what he said--and this makes perfect sense and resonates with me-- is when there is malice in our hearts, there is no amount of education or of training that police can go through, for them to be able to treat people properly. It begins in the heart. And I've owned six businesses and I equate it to being a business owner when you're trying to hire someone. You can hire someone to do a job and you can train them for that job. But you cannot train their character they have the character that they've developed that they were born with, that they have decided to evolve one way or another over time and that you cannot teach you cannot teach someone how to learn,

in their hearts. You can't teach someone how to be respectful to people from their heart in a genuine, absolutely loving capacity, that that is part of that person that's an integral part of that person's character. And that does not change. What we need to do is we need to raise our children to live from their hearts to have these conversations, like how do we change this? Raising our children sitting around the dinner table, having conversations with people, not accepting people's bigotry, their bias there small mindedness, like when you're in a conversation with someone and that something comes up and someone says something that is offensive, and maybe it's between two white people. Are you strong enough to say to that other person "Hey, that's, that's totally racist", or do you go along with it? Just because you don't want to create friction or do you say, "Hey, you know, that's not really acceptable"?

So, I know we need to respect other people's viewpoints, but when it comes to this type of thing, to me it's just intolerable. It has to start in our hearts, this change has to start in our hearts. Once it's in our hearts, then we can take it to friends. We can take it to our churches, we can take it into our communities, we can take it to our local government levels, but it has to be in our hearts, like what is it going to take to make this change? I feel very sad and disheartened and shameful about the inexcusable incident with George Floyd, and the many, many, many people before him men and women who have been victims of abuse in our societies of profiling, of bigotry, of hatred, and I understand why it is creating such anxiety and terror in these families.

The level of frustration, I can totally understand that. I don't think our response to that should be more violence and more hatred. I just think that hatred begets hatred. Love brings on more love, like attracts like. If we can get through this peacefully and demonstrate in ways that are peaceful, then we can get the attention and respect. I think back to not just this last decade, not just the last few years, but I think about the hundreds of years where we have mistreated Native Americans. Blacks, the Japanese, the internment camps here and I know that was war. But think about this isn't just an isolated incident. This is the American public and our leadership, that and especially today, our leadership that is propagating this hatred.

And all of this is occupying our soil. This is not a situation that's happening somewhere else. This is on American soil where we, we believe that everyone should have a right to freedom. I mean, that is part of our democracy. So why isn't that happening? Why isn't that going across all races, all sexes, like, I still don't believe women are even equal. So, imagine being a black woman, you've got the layering of the inequities of being female, just by virtue of you being born female. And then if you are a person of color, you have that layered on as well. And then you go back hundreds of years and all of the

deplorable treatment and slavery you go back hundreds of years, and there's all that layering as well, which I understand is still residing in these peoples on a genetic level.

And none of that past sadly can be undone. I wish it could be. The future starts with each of us now committing in our hearts, to love all of our fellow brothers and sisters. We take that into our daily lives into our workplace, into conversations around the dinner table, into boardrooms, into town hall meetings and into government. We need to start with our hearts and work our way outward.

I had the very fortunate experience of being invited into sororities as a keynote speaker. One was Alpha Kappa Alpha, and the other was Delta Sigma Theta. And both of these organizations are comprised of these educated, beautiful, talented, caring black women. And in these conversations, I sat around the table and I was thinking about how they raise their children. And I had the pleasure of meeting this one gentleman who came to this particular event where I was talking and sat around the table and he was the most eloquent kind, educated man. And it just reinforced these values, the sense of family and how they raise, not they, not they being they and us, but how these people have raised their children to be respectful, contributing members of the community. And I think we all need to take a lesson from that.

White people and every people to raise our children with the love in our heart, and not to be bigoted not to be racist, not to be sexist. There are just so many ways that we need to grow and improve. I believe if we can become brave enough to stand up to all this racism, bigotry, ignorance, small mindedness, and all these other "-isms", then we have a chance of bringing people, elevating people into the light. And that's where we need to be, we need to stand together. We need to be brave.

We need to not accept any of this in our communities. And once we can do that, white women can stand with our black women sisters, and help in this fight to end racism. It has got to happen.

Just a couple of days ago, I decided to leave my house. I was a little stir-crazy and went to go get my car washed. And while I was entering the drive thru, my window was down and I just heard someone groan. And I looked out my window and I saw a man lying on the ground and recognizing he was homeless, and that he may have been in distress, I jumped out of my car with just a little bit of cash that I had in my wallet. And while I've been sheltering in place, I haven't really needed really much cash lately. So, I had an entire whopping \$6 and so I jumped out of my car with that and he was lying on the cement up against a wall in the shade. It was a pretty warm day.

He had his eyes closed the entire conversation. And I just wanted to share it with you this is this is how it went.

Me: "Excuse me, are you okay"?

Peter: "Yes, I'm just really tired. I walked a long way last night."

Me: "I have \$6 for you. I'm so sorry it's not more. Is okay if I leave it in your hat? Maybe you can buy a sandwich."

Peter: "Are you an angel?"

And, and I was a little taken aback. I didn't quite know how to answer that. And I said, "Well, maybe just for you, just for today I am."

Peter: "What's your name?"

Me: "I'm Toni".

Peter: "I'm Peter"

Me: "It's a real pleasure to meet you, Peter".

Peter: "Is there a store around?"

Me: "Yes, right on the other side of this wall, you can get yourself a sandwich."

Peter: "I like oatmeal."

And I just laughed. I said, "Ah, that's so funny because it just so happens that I own a healthy oatmeal business. I wish I had some with me, but I don't."

Peter: "Do they sell it in the store?:"

Me: "No, I'm sorry, you take good care of yourself and God bless you."

Peter: "You too."

I walked back to my car which was by the way still in the car wash drive through where no one could get past to me but fortunately it was a slow day there. And I thought I'd at least check my trunk for some product and I remember taking everything out. I had this little basket and I had some of my protein meal bars and some of my grab and go cups because I share them with people as I go through my life that I feel might want to try it or need it--in this case it was a need. So, I remember taking everything out so I had no hope of any remaining secret stash but to my great surprise, I found five little grab and go cups and all the different flavors and also a bottle of water. So I let out a gasp!

Peter: "Are you hurt?"

Me: "No, I just found oatmeal for you! Here are five cups and some water." And I sat them down beside his hat with a \$6. in it.

"These are healthy, it'll make you feel good."

And I was just thinking about how hard it must be for him to get nutrition and also especially protein.

"It has lots of protein, you just add water from the store."

Peter: "God bless you."

Me: "Bless you too Peter."

So, I left in tears just wishing I could do more, but really happy to have been blessed to meet him. And as I was driving away, this woman drove up right next to me, and she rolled down her window and she had a little 10-year-old boy in the passenger seat sitting next to her. And she said, "I seen what you did." And I said, "What did you see?" And she said, "I saw you help that man, Bless you!"

Me: "Oh my goodness. Well, thank you so much."

And, of course then the tears started flowing even more. But this man was homeless, and this man was clean. This man was appreciative and he was gentle. And this man happened to be black. This man is my brother, and I love him.

I just feel like it's so important to share this story because that man is somebody's son, that man is somebody's brother. Maybe he's a parent. I don't know. I didn't ask him his situation. But every single life matters. I will tell you that right now. Get that in your heart. Please, if you don't already feel that way, probably you do, or this whole podcast series would not appeal to you. But Black Lives Matter. Homeless people matter. Every life matters. And this was a small act that took five minutes of my time. It probably gave him a few days' worth of meals, and it probably helped him out somewhat. Maybe I didn't change the outcome of his life. Maybe I didn't impact decisions that he might make or the future help that he might get. But I know I made a slight change. And I know that what I did is that I took the love in my heart. And I took a small period of time and I took the resources that were in my car that I think God placed there because I have no idea how those samples in that bottle of water got into my truck.

But I think about what if that day, what if I did something differently? What if I decided not to go to the carwash; it doesn't really matter? I'm not really driving anywhere

anyway. Right? What if I decided to go to the grocery store *before* I went to the carwash instead of the other way around? Would he still have been there? You know, things could have just taken a really different tact. What if I decided not to stop for this man, even though I heard him groaning? How much guilt I would have felt about that? I just feel like every single thing, every single action that we take creates a ripple. And that ripple of goodness can be spread to other people. Just think about that one small gesture that you make; an act of kindness can help other people tremendously.

Maybe it filled his heart with love in that moment. Maybe it filled that man with some hope that life was going to get a little bit better for him. Maybe it helped feed that man for another couple of days until he could have some time to figure out what he was going to do next.

When you do something kind for someone, it has a ripple effect. That person, when their heart is filled with love, they have greater capacity to share that love with somebody else.

And that is where it starts. It starts in our hearts, just like Eddie Garcia said.

You cannot take a person with malice and expect this goodness to be shared in the world. You have to have love in your heart, goodness in your heart, share it freely, share it openly. Share it with whoever you can. Be brave. Don't tolerate small mindedness. Don't tolerate racism. Don't tolerate sexism. Don't tolerate prejudice, bias, or hatred.

You can do your part you can stand with people who need the support, who need it right now. Our people of color are needing the most. They need more police support. They need more support from their brothers and sisters.

So please do what you can to help people have the equality that we privileged people are already experiencing and enjoying. Thank you so much for listening. Please share this please subscribe. May God be with you. Bless your heart. And thank you for listening.

© 2020 Toni Julian. All rights reserved. Not to be reprinted or used in any way without written permission from Toni Julian.