

BSC | Episode 5 | Final

Sun, 8/16 3:01PM 46:09

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, leaders, leadership, black, audiobook, entrepreneurship, huey, ron, book, article, read, chicago, community, struggle, high school, person, started, learned, sons, empathetic

SPEAKERS

Dr. Thomas, Dr. Fowles, Ronald Hart-Brown

D Dr. Thomas 00:01
Black Social Capital Black Social Capital. Today's guest is Ronald Hart-Brown. Ron is an engineer and multimedia visionary who specializes in video production, marketing and the design of websites, graphics and pro-Black products. He has more than 12 years of experience in videography and photography, nine years of experience in design, and six years of experience in education. Ron started his company Huey's Sons, which is a pro-Black Millennial accessories company. And he started in order to bridge the gap between modern design and Black history. He uses his design skills to tell Millennial stories through some fashion accessories. Ron believes Black people need to leverage our economic power to bring about social change. And that the key to Black prosperity is shifting future generations from employees to business builders and investors. Welcome, Ron!

R Ronald Hart-Brown 01:16
Thank you. Thank you Dr. Theo, Dr. Jaqui. Definitely appreciate having me on here. You know that it's a blessing. It's a blessing. So thank you.

D Dr. Fowles 01:25
I'm really excited to have you on today. Because you combine all my favorite thing, right? If anybody that knows me knows that Huey P. Newton, is one of my favorite revolutionary figures. He was the first person that I saw that was both a scholar. Not that many people

realize he was a Doctor Huey P. Newton he he knew of the fact that he was in the community doing hands on work. And so when I saw that your company was named Huey's Sons, but let me just click here just to see and then when I I saw that you were able to build upon your passions of education, of business, and fashion. In all these ways that were really revolutionary, I was like, Look, we got to connect. And of course, all these collaborations came together because we're part of that royal blue and white family as well. All the things came together and I was like, Look, here we are today. We're gonna make it happen. great conversations about to happen.

R

Ronald Hart-Brown 02:28

Thank you. And I'm glad to hear you know, that somebody even acknowledges or recognizes the historical side of it, you know, and then, you know, some I've had so many people who and I recently dropped a pin, but it's many people who think that the Huey's sons is originally based off you if you're Huey Freeman, which I love. Don't get me wrong. I love the Boondocks, too. That's, that's, that's a part of my love. But like you said, if you go back to it, it's all tied back to Huey. You know, Huey P Newton. So Dr. Huey P. Newton.

D

Dr. Fowles 02:55

Yes. Yes. So I mean, even even just with that, we're gonna get started with our Intellectual Capital Segment dropped some knowledge on folks. And this segment is really talking about how to how we connect with our academic and scholarly side to things that are really going on here in real life in the real world. And so, we're going to talk about this article from, from Black Enterprise. On Carla Harris says leadership tools for unprecedented times, right? We've got this phrase going on right now, these are unprecedented times, how do we navigate

D

Dr. Thomas 03:30

MmmmmHmm.

D

Dr. Fowles 03:32

And so, this article really focuses on three actionable habits that define leadership. And they said that these habits are one to be visible as a leader, two to be transparent as a leader, and three to be empathetic as a leader. So so i think i think one of the things that I thought about was that these are great leadership points in general. But I want to open it up to you, Ron, just to give us some thoughts initially, about about the article and how you define leadership. And we'll get into the conversation that way.

R

Ronald Hart-Brown 04:12

Yeah, thank you. I mean, you know, Carla Harris is a great writer, leadership expert, you know, the things you've done in the industry. I think that the three points that the article summarizes definitely are valid. But I think that they're, you know, they look different in certain communities. You know, and I think that that's one thing that I've missed from the article that may not necessarily come across, you know, if you read the article, you know, if I read it as a Black man, I read it one way, but if I read it as or try to read it, I can't read it as but I try to read it as a white executive. I think they want to see it in different ways. One, especially being the empathy aspect. Empathy looks different to me from a Black man, then it does look from you know, a majority stakeholder or a a majority. I don't want to be keeping man, PG, but a white person. You know. So I think that that's a part of the conversation a little bit. And especially, you know, if I didn't change the lens and know that, you know, a Black woman is sharing and writing this, I think that there's a lot of things that commonly get missed and in her writing. And it's funny that, you know, when we started scheduling this and setting things up, I was actually reading her book, Expect to Win.

D

Dr. Thomas 05:27

Oh!

R

Ronald Hart-Brown 05:28

So literally, you sent me the article, and I was in the middle of the book, and I was like, the timing of this. So I think that she's got a lot of insight. I mean, you know, the way she breaks down, you know, and expects and phrases that she you know, leaders have to be, you know, like you said, we make sure I have the article up some I don't want to you know, misquote you know, beyond, you know, the transparency aspect. I think that there's a lot to be learned in being transparent, but then there's a lot to be learned in what you get what you're what you're transparent about. So yeah, I think that this definitely a lot to unpack in the article.

D

Dr. Fowles 06:09

What do you think about the concept of not only being empathetic but being unreachable? I think that those are two different concepts. Right. So, yeah, what do you think about being unreachable as a leader?

R

Ronald Hart-Brown 06:21

I think it's, it's a thin line that many leaders don't know how to toe or cross. You know. So I mean, if I think back to even my own professional experience, I had a lot of I've had a lot of leaders or managers, I don't, you know, make sure that there's a difference between the two, who, you know, consider themselves empathetic, but their team may not. But the team may didn't consider them reachable. And they themselves might say, You know why I'm reachable? Yeah, but I'm more empathetic. I understand where you all are coming from. But it's very hard, I think to be in and I think this is why she puts it in the article is very hard to be empathetic to people who are your subordinates or people who are under you, especially if you didn't come through the same path that they came from. And I think that, you know, we have to understand that there are a lot of I mean, especially in this world that we live in right now, there's a lot of people who are having experiences that do not understand holistically everybody's struggle. And that empathy is something that you're not born with. Empathy is something that, you know, it takes years of work to really understand and get, and until people are acknowledged, I think, till people acknowledge that, then, you know, it's going to be a struggle for a leader to really walk in that empathy but like you said, the reachable aspect, a leader can be very reachable, and you know, sit down and it's very easy to sit across the desk from somebody or to sit across the desk from you know, somebody that you're working with, and not understand their struggles and not understand you know, their directions and paths. So you're you're 100%, right? I think that there's a thin line there. And the goal, I think, is to cross into that empathy. But maybe that first step is to at least be reachable if you can't, you know, be empathetic, or if you've never been trained or never really gave the energy into that personal growth to be empathetic. And it's something I'm even working on.

D

Dr. Thomas 08:20

Along those lines, I think about the type of person you have to be as a leader to be able to handle these unprecedented times and to handle crises and not panic and like, and be empathetic and be present right with the individuals that you're leading. The article opens up with a quote, crisis reveals who leaders are and I think that's just absolutely true right now, a lot of us are noticing the human side of our leaders, right. So they're seeing our, our leaders just be human beings because, you know, we're just at about point where we can't hide like our personal situations, right? Like, at home on zoom, right? I got kids maybe I got pets that want to walk across the screen, or I'm just struggling right with, like, I'm trying to start this meeting on a happy note, but actually, I'm not terribly happy because there's a lot going on, and I'm just not gonna hide it. So I think that's, I think that being transparent in that way is really good because I think it makes the the empathy that you can try to give more authentic, but I also think that those of us who weren't doing that work before, those bad leadership skills that people were exhibiting, like, if you haven't

been doing the work, you can't jump in and just be, you know, big, you know, savior type leader or empathetic leader now, right, because you never even built those relationships people have and they're just in there, you know, those are the ones who they've done the work and they are just, they're killing it right now. They're killing the leadership game.

R

Ronald Hart-Brown 09:59

I mean, love, you know, when I, when I saw it and read it I applied, immediately started applying these thoughts to our current government leadership. And, and that applies across the board. So that's not just our that's just not the person in the Oval Office right now. But when we start looking at, you know, AOC, you know, when I started looking at, you know, some of these other leaders who are in office and holding office who understand and they but like you said, they put in that work on the front end, they understand what their demographics need. I mean, right now, and, you know, I currently reside in Chicago, and my family and we look at how the governor has pushed back against, you know, a lot of things that are supposed to happen, right, like, Oh, we want the economy to get back up and running, but the governor's like, no, we're not ready yet, or even the city of Chicago itself. You know, when

D

Dr. Thomas 10:59

The Mayor

R

Ronald Hart-Brown 10:59

Right! Like, I love it. And she's, she's unapologetic. And you know, it's like no need to sit all Black A's down. ain't ready yet. You know, that takes off, you know, the audacity to do that takes that, like you said at the beginning of relationships, the beginning understandings of what a community needs, which are, you know, subordinates leave what people really need. And sometimes they may not understand what they need, and that that really then starts going into that leadership and how do you then communicate and bring your team with you, across that across those lines?

D

Dr. Fowles 11:33

I think that's a good segue into a question that I had something from something that you brought up earlier, which was that there's a difference between leadership and management. Could you define those for us?

R

Ronald Hart-Brown 11:46

I mean, I'll define them for myself. I mean, you know, you've seen the graphics, I think that there's a good way to put it, those are good visuals and putting it you know, but at the end of the day, a leader is somebody in the trenches with you, versus a manager or somebody that's just telling you what to do or what where to go. Go, you know, if you're not willing to I've had positions and jobs where, you know, we're at the office till eight o'clock, nine o'clock. If I look up and look over and my management's not with me, then I'm starting to second guess really the leadership and the value that you have, for me as an employee, or as a team member, you know, it may not even be an employee, I might be volunteering, you know, there's so many other applications that leadership outside of the workplace, you know, so when we start thinking about, you know, leadership versus management, you know, I think the question becomes, to whomever is asking it for themselves, is which do you want people to invest in buy into, you know, if you really just want a nine to five job if you really just want somebody to show up, go home, show up, go home, then you know, it's highly possible that you need to just be a manager. You know, your position relies just simply on people showing up data entry going home, then so I think it works. Sometimes they just have a manager. But if you're want to create a culture and you really want to create an environment That is communal, then you have to really be a leader and pour into that pot. Whether that be you know, bringing your family around people, you know, whether that be, you know, sharing your own struggles and sharing your own voyage and journey. You know, I mean, I can't tell you how many times I've had leaders who, you know, when it came time to give me coaching and criticism, it's hard for me to listen because I don't know what you've been through. You know, so it's, when are you going to share? Oh, I went through this so that I, you know, I'm here to help you because I went through it. You know, and I think that that's a really about, again, asking yourself, what type of you know, style that you want to fit within?

D

Dr. Fowles 13:44

In terms of being visible? Because we talked about being empathetic, we talked about being transparent. But one of the things that were the first tidbit was to be visible, right? And I think that A lot of people think that being invisible means that you're in the front, right? And a lot of what you just talked about was, you don't necessarily need to be need to be in the front, but you need to be in the trenches, right? You could be in the back, pushing people forward, you could be in the middle, making sure people don't lose their way. Or you could be in the front setting the vision, but as long as you're in the trenches, I think that that's really the point of being visible.



Dr. Thomas 14:27

So I have one more question I would like to ask during this segment. So in the article, Carla Harris says folks of color and women in particular often get their opportunities to lead during crisis. And I have been saying this as I've been watching different employment announcements come in recently. I feel like that is great, right? Anytime people of color, women can get you know, professional opportunities to lead, that is a great thing. But isn't a like handing people the keys to a wrecked car?



Ronald Hart-Brown 15:07

especially with I mean, you bring it up, especially with women, specifically Black women. You know, I mean, and even take it even a step further. I mean, there's some organizations who are realizing right now, you know, the value of the LGBTQI+ community, and you're seeing some leadership's come out of that. But specifically, you know, especially Black women, I mean, I've seen it like it's same with you or I've seen a couple of, you know, high ranking positions shift or changing You see, now somebody steering the ship that is that looks like us. Right. And, you know, I equated to, you know, when President Obama took office,



Dr. Thomas 15:40

Yes!



Ronald Hart-Brown 15:42

It's easy to hand over their ships to- the keys to a sinking ship. And then when it's fixed you then want to shift back and that's exactly what America did like, I thought once you go Black, you don't go back but that, but



Dr. Thomas 15:58

Can we just can we just be consistent for a while?



Ronald Hart-Brown 16:02

Exactly.



Dr. Thomas 16:03

It is gonna take more than just one person serving in that position for a few years to really turn an organization around, right? These organizations are like diversity is great! And it's like, yes, diversity is amazing. Inclusion's great! Yes, inclusion is amazing. But I mean, if your leadership doesn't reflect it, if your leadership, you know, and if your leadership isn't necessarily like, you know, reflecting it because they have, you know, those specific identities, can they at least do the work right? are they capable? Are they listening to their employees who have different you know, who have those minoritized identities? Are they you know, looking at policies when employees or customers or whoever or students are saying like, Hey, this is kind of racist or this is a sexist or this is, you know, homophobic like are the leaders able to do that? And you just you can't just have somebody come in for a few years and expect like, Oh, they fixed it.

D

Dr. Fowles 17:08

But I think but I think to that point, though, right, you get the keys to a sinking ship. I don't even know about the boats have keys, I don't know.

D

Dr. Thomas 17:17

Who knows?

D

Dr. Fowles 17:19

When I get a boat I'll let you know if it has keys or if you start it in some other way, but you know, we leaders come in a predominantly Black women or folks of color come in, they might fix the situation or at least set a path. Hmm. Oh, and then what I've seen is that there's no recognition of what they did, right? Yeah. So even if somebody else takes takes the steering wheel, like, you have to be able to recognize what the person did because at the end of the day, that person is moving on to their next thing and they need to be able to to to have that clout that fixing the problem gives them and I think that that recognition often often goes one way only right? Or, or the person that did the things has to has to create the pedestal themselves. Right. So I think about you know, the Black Lives Matter movement, everybody's saying Black Lives Matter right now. Oh yeah-

R

Ronald Hart-Brown 18:27

And it was women that started it

D Dr. Fowles 18:28
But but the the women that started had to create their own pedestal to say like, hey, like we did this, um, we're glad that all y'all are participating now and all y'all participating in

D Dr. Thomas 18:40
But hello?

D Dr. Fowles 18:41
Whatever variety of forms that you want. But But we did do this, you know, and we're here. You know, it's a collective movement, but if it wasn't for us, right, right. And I think that that recognition is always key, especially as we're navigating in and out of systems that weren't necessarily built for us. Right.

R Ronald Hart-Brown 19:03
Right. I mean, and even to touch still on that. I mean, I noticed that there's an age aspect in there, too. You know, and we commonly, I've ran into it. And this is also sort of why I'm so pro-Millennial, and I wear that as a badge. You know, we fight so hard to acknowledge and get recognition. But you know, when you're, it works both ways. I think that it works when you're, you know, on the older end of the spectrum, but then when you're on the younger end of the spectrum, people don't give you value. People don't innately just give you Oh, you have this knowledge base, it doesn't matter if you've been doing it for three years versus 30 years. You know, it's just simply, oh, you know, are you able to do this and if you're able to deliver on whatever it may be, you know, then people move on. And I've noticed that, you know, my generation and and Millennials have a communal mentality on a lot of these things. Don't speak up and saying, hey, I want the leadership. I want to be the voice or face of this. It's no we are a whole our collective. And that's, you know, a problem when it comes time to getting those getting those roses, right? When it comes to getting our flowers, you know, then it becomes Oh, and nobody's there. So we're just gonna keep on going. No! Like, like you said, you know, we need to lift ourselves up without being labeled arrogant without being labeled, you know? What's another word for it, you know, crass without being labeled, you know, just, you know, in a- hole. And, you know, it's a struggle that we commonly face

D Dr. Thomas 20:39
Or entitled, they like to use that word for us. Entitled.

R Ronald Hart-Brown 20:44
Right. Which is so ironic.

D Dr. Thomas 20:47
If there are no further questions, I think we will go ahead and wrap up this part of our show or this you know this segment and take a quick break. Hey, are you rolling your eyes right now because yet another talented student is questioning their abilities

D Dr. Fowles 21:05
Well turn a negative into a positive with a no deficit model, or no imposter syndrome tee. Check out all of our Black Social Capital swag, and stay motivated by going to staymotivatedandrisetogether.com/shop.

D Dr. Thomas 21:21
And now we're back. We're gonna continue with our Community Capital Segment. This is a discussion of a Black professionals journey or lessons learned. And today Ron, we are going to find out all about your professional journey. So first question. Can you tell us about your educational path? How you chose the institutions you went to, majors, degree programs?

R Ronald Hart-Brown 21:44
Yeah, so definitely, um, so my educational journey honestly really starts somewhat in tragedy. So my parents got divorced when I was 16 years old. And you know, I had to decide then sort of what I was going to do because neither one of my parents were around. So I changed high school I chose to change high schools. Like I remember forging my parents signature and everything. And I switched to a high school that was a co op high school and I decided to focus on broadcast journalism. So I started that in high school and I love this so much. I decided, you know, what schools do I really want to focus in from a university standpoint, wanted to continue. And we're good enough. I only applied to two schools. I applied to the University of Cincinnati, and I applied to Morehouse. And I got into both but money talks and I ended up going to the University of Cincinnati. At UC, I sort of broadened my horizons there. funny enough, weird enough, you know, I got there and didn't feel welcome in my program. I was one of two Black males. When I wanted to do radio shows they weren't interested in the content that I wanted to touch on. When I wanted to do a television show or do something, you know, and they

weren't interested in supporting a lot of those directions that I wanted to go in. So I found myself still staying in the program. But I expanded and I said, I want to learn more about marketing, broadcast, promotions, and all that kind of stuff. How do I use video to promote products? Even if I'm not going to do the actual, you know, television studio path or anything. So I really dove in dug my heels in there. And I got a lot of experience working with Black owned businesses. That's really where I sunk my teeth in. I mean, shout outs to the African American Chamber of Commerce in Cincinnati. My work there for two years before I graduated. And that's really also what exposed me to entrepreneurship. From there I started my first company, I did t shirts with a good friend of mine, never doing t shirts ever again. But I got a lot of experience and I think that that's one of the things that I would challenge anybody who's listening who starting out You know, make your own experiences, you know, I didn't find what I wanted. So you know, I did YouTube channels, I did a whole bunch of other things where I just went ahead to get the experience myself. If the institution not going to give it to you, there's so many other outlets out there that you can find your voice in. And so from there, um, you know, this was 2011 2012 I was I was scared out of my out of my heels and definitely was not ready to take on a full time job. So I decided to go get a master's degree. And you know, I would- it depends on who you are. I don't want to say do or don't go get a master's degree. But actually, if you do, you know, make sure you have a path forward. And I knew when my path was I wanted to do something in cinema and digital media. So I actually ended up moving to Chicago and my girlfriend at the time, who's now my wife. She is originally from Chicago. So I applied to two schools again, you know, it's there's a pattern here, I guess. I don't know. And I got into NYU's film program, but it also got into DePaul University's cinema and digital media program. And I chose because I was in love, even though we had broken up, but I was in love. And I came to Chicago

D Dr. Fowles 25:15
you were in an entanglement

R Ronald Hart-Brown 25:17
I was in an entanglement haha

D Dr. Thomas 25:18
Oh No!

R Ronald Hart-Brown 25:23

Yeah. Oh, man. timing of that. Oh, yeah. So, but I came to Chicago. Luckily, you know, she, you know, took me back. And we ended up getting married later down the line, I finish my master's program. And I had an opportunity to really work for some good institutions here in Chicago, but when during my master's, you know, sort of how I did in undergrad, sunk my teeth and got my feet wet in marketing. I then was like, I want to get my feet wet in education. And I had the great opportunity to teach what I loved. Broadcast Journalism, entrepreneurship for a SouthSide Chicago High School. And so that was definitely a beautiful thing, seeing students, high school students take their ideas and interests and try to turn it into businesses. That, you know, fueled me even more in terms of entrepreneurship. But as in education specifically, you know, high school education, I got burnt out very quickly. Taught for five years. And then from there, I said, Well, you know, I've got these experiences, I got these degrees. I left went working for a marketing company. I liked it, but it wasn't what I wanted. And I learned a lot in terms of running and starting my own firm starting my own company. From there, I went and worked for Catholic institution and learned a lot there, did their website, managed their marketing and all that kind of stuff. So I'm at a point right now where I'm literally asking myself, you know, what I want to do next I started, you know, like I said, I've started so many businesses over this time. Know, the instinct in me says, you know, it's time to invest in myself. It's time to really take those lessons that I've learned and really just say, you know, let me do this for my community, but also do this for myself.

D

Dr. Fowles 27:12

Yeah, well, I want to jump in right there, right? I think I was. I'm really excited to find out why entrepreneurship for you. Right? There's so there's so many paths, right? And you're doing entrepreneurship in such a unique way. Tell us a little bit more about how Huey's Sons got started. You know why entrepreneurship has been a path for you and, and kind of where you see that next step is going for you.

R

Ronald Hart-Brown 27:39

Thank you. Yeah, so I'll just tell you a little bit about Huey's Sons started so Huey's Sons. You know, we talked a little bit about at about it at the beginning, but Huey's Sons came out of this idea. Two ideas really, I'll simplified it came out of two ideas. One being I was doing design work for people and I will see my designs go on and sell on a T shirt. shirt or a hat or something. And I would, you know, I would only get, you know, \$100 of that, from you know, and this is when I was in starting from when I was in high school all the way through college, I didn't value my skill set my artistic ability enough to charge more. So I was charging people \$100 for a design and then they would take it and go literally make thousands of dollars. And I said to myself, you know, I, why am I doing this without having

my own outlet for my own storefront? And then from there, you know, I started thinking, it has to represent me, it has to be a part of me. And so then, you know, in college, my nickname was Huey, I was very militant, I was very pro Black. So we started I started Huey's sons also because I his would have been a year and a half now ago. I had a son on the way. And so I wanted something and I already had a daughter, which brings up a whole other struggles internally that they'll have about naming a Huey's sons versus hueys kids. But I wanted something to leave my kids. I wanted to create not just a brand, but something that they could be a part of, you know, and you know, you check Instagram, you'll sometimes see them stuffing envelopes, you'll sometimes see them, you know, putting stuff in boxes and giving contributions. And so it's really where it started from wanting to be an outlet or a voice. Again, for me being as a Millennial, wanting to be an outlet for pro-Black accessories. Like there's so many pictures and historical documents that we look at that I have an eye and I'm just like, oh, that would be dope, if they shifted this or changed this or did this with you know, one of my favorite pins is, you know, my Dope Black Man pins, which came from the idea of, you know, I am, I am a Black Man. I'm a Dope Black Man. Like, at the end of the day, we progressed that to a modern day, you know, lingo, that's how I think that that sort of translates. And then also, you know, the character pins and everything that I do or you know, I always say we know the ideas at some point to hire somebody, but right now, it's just me, so

D

Dr. Thomas 30:00

And the kids, right?

R

Ronald Hart-Brown 30:01

And the kids. Right? So that's where Huey's Sons came from. And then my why for entrepreneurship is very weird. Because as a kid growing up, both my parents are college educated. And both my parents come from our boomers, late boomers, and come from the mentality that you get a job, you work it, you know, you know, entrepreneurship wasn't something I was raised around. You know, even cousins, uncles, etc. Nobody was like, you know, go start your own thing. Nobody said that. It was always worked for GM and get a good job. If you don't go to college, if you go to college, get a good job, and then come back home and help. And those were mentalities that I necessarily didn't have or wanted to be around. They're great. You know, I think that they, you know, it's for somebody I think it is for somebody, you know, I've worked a job all the way up to this point, but I've also started so many other other things on the on the side. But I, at the end of the day, I think entrepreneurship was for me because it became a avenue to create generational success. You know, and we always, you know, hear people talk about creating generational wealth, which is great. But for me, it's not about wealth. For me, it's about creating generational

success. You know, I want my kids to go to high school, and, you know, be wearing stuff that they created and selling it, you know, I don't want them to go to high school and say, Hey, I need to work at McDonald's to pay for senior prom, I want them to go to high school and say, you know, I've got all this already set aside, I'm going to I'm going to run things myself and set up stores instead of all these opportunities, you know, so that's really the biggest goal for me is not to sell a product or to sell something is to say and teach those coming after me specifically my kids, that you don't have to rely on somebody else for a job.

D Dr. Fowles 31:57
I'm up here taking notes

D Dr. Thomas 31:58
Same.

D Dr. Fowles 31:59
I feel like the educators journey is different. The entrepreneurs journey is different. But in blending those two worlds and in the positions that you've been in and are in now, what's a what's a lesson that you think is something that you can carry through? What are some lessons that you've learned thus far that you'll take with you to the next step?

R Ronald Hart-Brown 32:28
Yeah. So, I mean, the biggest one that I keep falling back on is, the more you pour into other people, the more you get back, I've had countless past students sharing in purchasing and supporting my business. You know, I poured into them when I was teaching now they're, they're supporting and helping me. You know, I've had people reach out and contact me and say, Hey, I'm interested in interning for, you know, your company, and I'm like, I'm nowhere near ready for that. But it's like, Okay, well, I need to get ready because, you know, apparently I have something that somebody is wanting to learn and learn from So, you know, how do I take what I have, and give it to somebody else? You know, in the biggest, that's the first thing I would say, the second thing, you know, constantly keep researching, reading, and learning. And that doesn't have to be from a textbook that's, you know, podcasts like this, that's, you know, audio books, that's, you know, conversations with thought leaders and things like that. You know, I think that when I look at my past students, you know, and I connect with so many of them on social media, and I talk to them still text them still have great conversations and relationships with so

many of them. Um, you know, the biggest thing that I've seen them struggle with is that they don't continue to push their thought process forward. And we as a community have to continue doing that. I think that that's one of the struggles we've had when we look at, you know, the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Arts Movement, Black Power movement, even until today. So few of us community wise, are pushing our thoughts forward. You know, we you know, Dr. Jaqui, Dr. Theo, you know, the fact that you have Dr. in front of your name, we know that you're pushing a thought forward. But how do we then say, you know, for John, who, you know, is going to school full time, how do we convince them that reading outside of your textbook is beneficial to you? Hmm. You know, and we don't see they don't see the value in it. And it's on us to show them the value in it. You know, I mean, I've had so many ideas just from reading other people's thoughts that helped me build my own. You know, and that doesn't mean just people that look like us. I mean, there's so many leadership books out there from John Collins from, you know, so many others that don't look like us. Take their thoughts and flip it for us.

D Dr. Thomas 34:51
Yep.

R Ronald Hart-Brown 34:52
And I think that's what we have to do. That's the biggest thing I will say from an educational standpoint. If you don't, I'm I struggle with this. You know, went to a talk at a high school that emphasized- it was a college preparatory was supposed to be a College Preparatory High School. And I do believe that, you know, we need to send our kids to college. But I don't think that we need to harp on it so much that we do. There's so many positions and jobs out there that are not being filled. That you know, if somebody picked up a book and learned a skill, you got a \$65,000 paying job. But then continue the conversation, pick up another book, and learn, you know, how to run 100 million dollar business that's hiring people for \$65,000. So I think that there's a lot in there that is beneficial. That we can take away.

D Dr. Fowles 35:41
So many thoughts running through my head one, I want to know what you're reading right now.

D Dr. Thomas 35:45
Right?

R

Ronald Hart-Brown 35:46

But what I'm reading right now, I'm finishing up Manning Marable's book on Malcolm X. I'm reading Fusion, who's the author by Denise Lee, which is a marketing book. I just finished The Ones We've Been Waiting For, which is a great book about, you know, again, young people running for office it has AOC in it has a lot of people who just ran for office and talks about how they are changing the systems that we live in.

D

Dr. Fowles 36:15

All I know is that you done read more books and just this past week, then some people have read this whole year. We gonna take those those suggestions, we're gonna add them to the show notes. Hopefully, people will pick up a book. That's where all the knowledge is.

R

Ronald Hart-Brown 36:32

Yes, it really is. It really is.

D

Dr. Thomas 36:34

And I was gonna add that I'm a I'm an audiobook person. I like to have my hands free and be walking around the house and cleaning up or whatever I'm doing right. And those audio books are great or when I'm like up and getting ready in the morning, not that I'm going anywhere in 2020. But theoretically when I used to be on my way to work, so yeah, figure out what works for you and and just get those books in because I mean, I think you're absolutely right. If you're not constantly tapping into these other brilliant people's thoughts, like they are writing them down and serving them up on a platter for you, right? Whether you get it in ebook form the physical book form, or that audiobook form, I just think that's, I think that's, I hope that's something that listeners are, you know, taking away and seeing as a theme, right? People always excited about what they're reading.

R

Ronald Hart-Brown 37:25

Exactly. And I want to I want to give some, some, some I want to give some wisdom. Because when I'm audiobook person to the biggest thing, the moment I realized, like, there were there was a good four or five years where I didn't read anything. And it took a good friend of mine. And he started a book club. And I was like, he started with The Alchemists, and that's his favorite book. And I was like, man, I I'm trying but I don't have time I got two kids. Where am I gonna find time to read a book and coworker of mine was like, Oh, just do audiobook. And I was like, I don't. I came up with all the excuses, right?

Like, I'm not supposed to-. I came with all the excuses. And so people who are listening right now, if you're coming with those excuses, you know, there are, I can tell you three two apps right now that will give you an auto audiobook for free. All you need is a public library card, and you can listen to audiobooks for free, no one is Hoopla. And the other is called Libby. So get out, get a library card, go download those apps, literally hundreds of thousands of audiobooks for free. Second, if you've got, you know, 10 \$15 extra a month, audible has even more stuff, you know, so I'm a audio person, audible person, and then third, I'm gonna take it to another level if you can find the PDF online. Siri, Alexa will literally read the PDF to you. So I- changed the game for me, changed the game completely. So I literally start off, I'll start on hoopla and Libby, for about, you know, I'm literally, you know, reading or somebody says, Hey, check out this book, I'll check and see if this Hoopla and Libby. If it's not in there, then I'll go to see if I can find a free PDF somewhere. If I can't find the free PDF, then I go to my audible and just go ahead and pay and use my credits for audible. At the end of the day, there is no excuse for not accessing like you said all this knowledge.

D

Dr. Thomas 39:27

I'm wondering if there are any professional or social organizations, you've been a part of that have helped you. So maybe they've helped you professionally, maybe they've just allowed you to connect with a community or they've allowed you to give back to a community. But are there any organizations that have been just good for you, in what your doing?

R

Ronald Hart-Brown 39:47

I'll share a few that definitely stand out for me. The first one is Profound Gentlemen. Profound Gentlemen is a, you know, a nonprofit organization focused on keeping Black males leaders in the classroom. So when I was teaching, a good friend of mine started it, you know, so many resources I pulled from there so many good people I pulled and, tapped into from there. So great, great community. So definitely get profoundgentlemen.org if you're interested. The next day, I became a member of 100 Black Men here in Chicago that allowed me to start mentoring and do mentoring consistently. So that definitely again, you know, I don't think that there are there there is a 100 Black Men in every organiz- in every city. But if you are able to tap into one or if you're able to even just volunteer, they're always looking for support, always looking for great thought leaders and do a lot of great programming where you can just again, volunteer and be a part of that. And then a third one is not just one but it's a lot of them is tap into Facebook groups and communities. There are so many I mean, if you are interested in anything, there's probably a Facebook group about it. You know, I've found so many great

like minded people through these groups that I'm able to learn from, you know, from mentoring about marketing from looking for and learning how to do design work or learning and looking for designers learning and looking for publishers, like I set a goal for myself and I might push it back but I haven't decided yet that I want to write a book. So I started looking into groups on how to write a book and there's so many people who are like, this is what I used to publish this is what I did to self published this is who I used for, you know, creating and as an editor, all these types of things. So for that one, like I said, I don't think that there's one specific one but look for and find your community online. That's just using Facebook. And then third, takes it sort of the other direction a little bit is follow as many like minded and non like minded people on social media. You know, we we commonly want to surround ourselves with people in stay in our comfort zone, which is good for to an extent. But you know, you're not going to grow if you continue to do that. And that's something I'm even recently trying to challenge myself even more to do. My wife always tells me that, you know, I don't like to be told no, or I don't like to be told to change something like in my designs. But I have to accept that there's, you know, everybody has feedback everywhere. Everybody has a voice. And at the end of the day, if you only surround yourself with people who have the same voice as you, then you're not going to grow.

D

Dr. Thomas 42:34

I really like what you said, because I think it can really show our listeners that there are a lot of small things or things that you can do that might feel small, but can eventually add up to you having this really dope network right to you eventually, being able to get some really poignant questions answered, like you're trying to figure out how to write a book. You found a group on that, right like Those things might seem small, but you might just meet that one person who's an expert who's just ready to help somebody, right? And just connecting and tapping into those things and doing it based on what you're interested in, as well as things that you might feel differently about right? following those like minded and those not like minded individuals and orgs can really, really can help you grow. I really appreciate that. I really appreciate you packaging that that way.

D

Dr. Fowles 43:31

I think. I think for the folks that are listening, just know that if you're listening to this podcast, you're also a part of our community here. Black Social Capital. Literally the point of this podcast is to help you build a network that's going to take you to the next level. And if that's something that you're looking for, you know, really reach out to us. Join our LinkedIn group on LinkedIn group is a space that will connect you to others. Guests like like Ron who are open to sharing more about their journey connecting into their their

context. And so find us on BlackSocialCapital.com. Click the LinkedIn link and you'll join the group continuing conversations just like this. So that's that's another outlet another group for you to participate in.

R Ronald Hart-Brown 44:22
Definitely, definitely.

D Dr. Thomas 44:23
I think this was great. I feel like I'm going to come up with so many questions in my mind later on for you, Ron. But I was just so busy taking notes, my my notes page is quite full. So I just want to say I appreciate your time. I am really excited for whatever is coming next for you because you have just, you've just been building right. Just know that you know, you got us in your corner rooting for you. We want to know what's next. And with that, we are out. Thank you so much.

R Ronald Hart-Brown 44:54
Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Jaqui. Thank you Dr. Theo for having me.

D Dr. Thomas 45:02
Black Social Capital

D Dr. Fowles 45:03
We hope you enjoy today's show remember the way we build social capital is to build self and build others I'm gonna. We're sure you guys some notes on your tablet computer or even using a pen and paper leave us review continue the conversation on social media at blacksocialcap and share the show with someone you know. Until the next episode, stay motivated and rise together.

D Dr. Thomas 45:27
Are you tired of bland, Eurocentric fashion accessories? Do you want to feel seen when you step out? Well then Huey's Sons is the brand for you. Huey's Sons is a pro-Black accessories company that focuses on Millennial style and Afrocentric values. They have a variety of products like lapel pins, buttons, hats, Apple watch bands and more. I bought some stickers and put them on my laptop and I have a few pins and the quality is great.

You will definitely find something for yourself and all your friends friends and family, check out HueysSons.com for the latest drop today