

**8: Self-Care, Grief, Friendship, First Generation Wealth, and Queer Intersectionality
with Jonathan Jimenez**



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kaneisha Grayson

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You are listening to *Scale Your Joy* with Kaneisha Grayson, episode eight. Get ready for a great one.

Welcome to *Scale Your Joy*, the only podcast that teaches high achievers with heart, how to craft a life and build a business focused on freedom, joy, self-expression and social impact. I'm your host Kaneisha Grayson, a Harvard Business School and Harvard Kennedy School grad, author, essayist and self-made entrepreneur. I did it and you can do it too. Let's get started.

Hello, hello. It's a warm and overcast day here in Austin. It's the perfect day for lounging around at home watching Netflix and then taking Zadie out to the dog park a few times. I love when it's overcast and warm because the overcast part gives me permission to do nothing. But the warm part makes it bearable to take Zadie out to the dog park the four times a day that I do. I hate being cold at the dog park. I'm always bundled up and my neighbors laugh at me at how bundled up I am at the dog park. But I don't like to be cold.

I've been watching the documentary *Made You Look: A True Story About Fake Art* on Netflix, and I'm really enjoying it. I'm about halfway through. If you like art or you like documentaries about cons, then this is a good one. This really makes me miss painting. I love to paint. My favorite medium is acrylic. And I like to use a lot of mediums to provide texture. So if you like to paint, or you like art, or you like documentaries check it out.

Today I'm interviewing my soul mate, Jonathan Jimenez, who less extravagant people might refer to as my childhood best friend. Jonathan and I will be talking about all kinds of things in this episode, just like we do when we hang out. We will discuss how we grew up, our 26-year-old friendship, the grief of losing our shared best friend Leah, sexuality, social class, and more.

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You definitely want to tune into this episode and make sure you can listen somewhere where you can laugh because JJ is a ham. And I think we'll have you cracking up at various points throughout this episode.

Today's listener spotlight is a voice memo from my first friend I made at Harvard Business School, and the closest friend I had while there. Her name is Tierra and she is such a generous, kind, fun, and wonderful person. Tierra and I have shared a lot of great memories over the last 13 years, Tierra. And we keep it very real with each other when it comes to the ups and downs in our lives.

I appreciate her so much. And I'm glad that you all will get to hear a tiny snippet of our friendship in this voice memo that she sent me yesterday and gave me permission to share with all of you.

“Hey Kaneisha, I hope you're doing well this morning. I just wanted to say that I was thinking about your podcast this morning and I really resonated with your feelings on like, I went to Harvard Business School, how come I don't know how to do all these things that I want to do in regards to starting a business and launching a business.

And I definitely have plenty of moments where I feel that way. It's like I have pieces of the puzzle, but I am missing some key knowledge on implementation. But anyway, I was just thinking about you and I just wanted to share. I hope you're having a great day.”

Kaneisha: Okay, it's time to jump into my conversation with my childhood best friend, my soulmate, Jonathan Jimenez, who I call JJ. Enjoy.

Kaneisha: Let's see, say something.

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JJ: Can you hear me clearly, I guess is the question.

Kaneisha: I can hear you queerly.

JJ: Freudian slip.

Kaneisha: Yeah, Freudian slip, I can hear you queerly. I think it's good. And the producers they'll make it sound better. They might be a little upset by the quality because they're audio snobs and they've turned me into an audio snob.

JJ: That's fine. I'm okay with that too.

Kaneisha: JJ.

JJ: Kaneisha.

Kaneisha: Jonathan Jimenez, welcome to the Scale Your Joy podcast and thank you for your time this Saturday afternoon.

JJ: Of course, anything for Kaneisha.

Kaneisha: Okay. So JJ, who would you say you are to me and who am I to you?

JJ: Oh, this is a hard question, but easy to answer I suppose. So we are obviously soulmates traveling the universe together for many millennia. And in this most recent reincarnation we are Akeelah and the Bee, JJ and Kaneisha.

Kaneisha: What is the Akeelah and the Bee?

JJ: It's a movie about a really smart Black girl and a chubby Latino best friend. And I'm like that is us.

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Kaneisha: Oh, I don't remember. Okay, I do... I think we saw that movie together when it came out. I just don't remember the chubby Latino best friend. So I see, that's why we're Akeelah and the Bee. Okay, I'm like, "Are you the bee?"

JJ: I mean, I'm full of honey, but.

Kaneisha: Okay. Okay, no, but really, yeah, so JJ summarized it really lovely. But we are soulmates, which is my highest label I can think to give someone. I adore JJ and he is a dear friend, a brother, sister, I don't know all, just everything. Everything to me.

JJ: I prefer gender neutral caregiver, but that'll work too.

Kaneisha: Okay. Yeah, he is amigx. Okay, so before we dive into a bunch of personal details, because there is a lot to talk about today about life, and loss, and our friendship. Let's talk about your educational and professional background. So tell us where you went to college. What you studied in college. What you're studying in grad school, and a little bit about your career.

JJ: Oh, absolutely. So I got a BA from Earlham College in 2006 in comparative languages and linguistics. And then I dabbled in teaching for like a hot minute and it was like not for me. And then I went back to school at University of Washington in Seattle for a nursing degree in 2011. And I've been a nurse since then. And recently, I am now in grad school for two degrees, an MBA in organizational leadership and a master's in nursing from St. Joseph's College of Maine, in Maine, obviously.

And yeah, and so my career has been a bedside nurse for the past 10 years. And in the last two years I've transitioned to a managerial role. So currently, I'm an assistant nurse manager in a clinic. And I very much enjoyed this transition from bedside nursing to administrative nursing.

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Kaneisha: Yes, I'm so proud of you. And actually not familiar with that phrase, bedside nursing versus administrative nursing. That's really an interesting split of the team or the profession and the phrase for me, so I'm glad to learn that. And I always like to refer to JJ as my first unwilling admissions consulting client.

JJ: Oh please, yes you are probably the 75% of why I got into college. Go ahead and tell that story.

Kaneisha: Yeah. So, you know, in high school I was very intent on being successful in the college application process and making sure that my best friends were successful. So it was me, JJ, Leah, and Josh, that I decided were going to work together on our college applications. And I made us all each an individual binder. Do you remember the binder JJ?

JJ: Oh yeah, the accordion binder, it was plastic. I love it.

Kaneisha: So it was the, yeah, little accordion file we each had. And we would, every weekend we would go to Leah's parents' house. And we would study for the SAT and the ACT, both tests. We would research colleges and we would write our essays. And we even went to visit multiple schools without our family, in other states without our parents.

JJ: We just got on planes like, "Hello."

Kaneisha: Yeah. Did you visit any colleges with your parents?

JJ: None.

Kaneisha: I didn't visit any college with my parents.

JJ: Not one.

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Kaneisha: I either visited them alone or like a diversity fly-in weekend or, you know, we would go together out of state to go look at colleges. Which now I think about it is so different than the way a lot of people visit colleges now.

JJ: Yeah, did we go to Hendrix college together?

Kaneisha: We did, we went to Hendrix College in Arkansas together and we all stayed, like we slept on the floor in different people's dorm rooms, yeah.

JJ: That's so crazy.

Kaneisha: Yeah, yeah, we totally did. Did you visit Earlham before you decided to go there? Or did you apply, get in, and just go without having visited?

JJ: No, I did fly in. Similar for, like they had like a diversity weekend but I do remember them being like, "You're not the right shade to be on the cover, but we'll include you in the weekend." And so I flew out there and got to meet everyone. So yeah, no.

Kaneisha: So you said something funny. One of the first of many, many funny things I'm sure you'll say during this interview, which is that you weren't the right shade to be on the catalog, the admissions catalog. So just to be clear, because people aren't seeing you. You look like a white person.

JJ: Oh, that's true. European white person, absolutely.

Kaneisha: Right, but you are...

JJ: I am, I'm Latino. More specifically Mexican American. And that side of my family looks "traditionally Mexican", everyone's like 5'5, you know,

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brown skin, black hair. And I look like a big forehead, high cheek-boned white person.

Kaneisha: You're very handsome, very handsome JJ.

JJ: But also, you know, not what people traditionally think of as Latino.

Kaneisha: Right, right. So there's this kind of coming out process that you have to do sometimes of being like, "Actually, I am a person of color."

JJ: I'm a secret Latino.

Kaneisha: A secret, yeah, stealth Latino. Okay, so wonderful. And one thing I want to point out that I always think is so cool is that you weren't the most school-ish of us in high school. But you have the most education out of all the friends. You have two bachelor's degrees and two master's degrees. And that's pretty awesome. And you did really well in your second bachelor's, and on your two masters.

JJ: Thank you. Yeah, no, it's the irony of seeing Facebook posts after I finished nursing school being like, "I will never go to school again. Strap me to a bed if I ever go to school again." As I'm like, you know, neck deep in a grad program. So it's interesting.

Kaneisha: Yeah, in two grad programs. Yeah, awesome. So we just talked about some of your great accomplishments. And I also just want to bring up that you are friends with some very type A people and high achievers. I do count myself in that bucket. Do you identify as a high achiever? Why or why not?

JJ: I do not necessarily identify as a high achiever. I identify myself as an emotional support human for high achievers. And the reason I don't associate with being a high achiever is because there is definitely a drive

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that high achievers have, this personality of like constantly wanting to do bigger and better. And I do not identify with that at all. I love to say no. I love to set boundaries and limits. And so I think high achieving people typically have trouble with that. And so I wouldn't say I'm high achieving, or a high achieving person, but I do surround myself with them at all times.

Kaneisha: Yeah, tell me about that. Why are you so drawn to driven people who are never satisfied and, you know, have that blessing and that curse of that high achieving type A plus personality?

JJ: Well, I think the reason for me is twofold. One, it's a selfish reason, like I'm a very good co-pilot. And so to always be surrounded by people who want to take charge, plan things, and execute is like very freeing for me because I can just go along with whatever plan they have. Which I think describes us perfectly in high school and I love it.

Kaneisha: I had so many plants.

JJ: I love it, I love it. I love being a good co-pilot. And then I think secondly, if that's a real word.

Kaneisha: Secondly is a real word.

JJ: Oh, that's good to know. Is I always have a desire, which I think is why I'm a nurse, is I have a desire to like "help people". And I feel like high achieving people send out this almost like distress call of like frantic nervous energy. And I'm like literally drawn to it like a moth to the flame. Like a wise person in a robe with a cup of tea being like, "Let me soothe your soul." So I think it's, you know, part selfishly because I don't like to plan things and high achieving people plan things for me. And the second is I do feel like I'm like spiritually called to these people.

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Kaneisha: Oh, that's beautiful. And that's really lovely. Well, if you like frantic energy and a lot of drive you would love my clients at The Art of Applying because it's like me, just cloned 100 times.

JJ: I would love it.

Kaneisha: Yeah. And so that's super interesting. The idea that high achievers actually have this energetic field around us that we may think maybe is like an aura of accomplishment or confidence, but it actually reads as stress and distress.

JJ: Absolutely, it's like a beacon to me.

Kaneisha: Ah, interesting. And you're called to it because you're like, "I can help this person and soothe their anxious soul. And they'll plan the vacation."

JJ: Absolutely, absolutely.

Kaneisha: That's super interesting. Okay, so let's talk some more about our friendship. We have been friends since -

JJ: Drum roll please.

Kaneisha: Drum roll, all I can do is like the R noise. We've been friends since fall of 1995.

JJ: Wow.

Kaneisha: For 26 years.

JJ: Our friendship qualifies for better, you know, discount on all the insurance because it's over 25.

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Kaneisha: Literally, that's how old our friendship is.

JJ: I love it.

Kaneisha: Our friendship could already have like, an underwater mortgage.

JJ: A baby.

Kaneisha: Yeah, I was going to give us three kids.

JJ: Oh, okay. Well, our friendship has made choices I have not made.

Kaneisha: Same. So it's very special to be like we have known each other for 26 of the 37 years we've been alive. Like, that's amazing. I only had to live 11 of my years without you.

JJ: It's true, although we did live only two streets apart from each other, we just never knew it.

Kaneisha: That's true. So maybe we even saw each other, which is super cool. And everybody listening, I literally remember the moment that I laid eyes on JJ and it was love at first sight. We were in our sixth grade English language class, Ms. Polikoff and the honors class. It was my first honors class ever. And the teacher had us introducing ourselves, and you stood up and you said, "My name is Jonathan Jimenez, but my friends call me JJ."

And you were just so tan from the summer, and a little chubby, and you were sparkly. You're like, little twinkles in your eyes, and you were just sparkling. And I was like, "He is so cool. He has a nickname." And I don't know why I was so smitten with the idea that you had a nickname and you were just so charismatic.

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And I don't know how I like introduced myself to you. I remember when we first exchanged numbers, it felt very exciting and transgressive like, "He's a boy and I'm a girl. We're exchanging numbers. This is the love of my life."

JJ: It was a Disney show episode.

Kaneisha: Yeah, for sure. And yeah, so what would you say, besides just the sheer amount of time that we've been friends, which is really special. What are some things that make our friendship special? And how has our friendship impacted your life?

JJ: Well, I would say I think the first and foremost is I have never laughed so much with another person. And it's a very distinctive laugh. It's just the laugh of like, full abandonment of like, this is the funniest thing that's ever happened. There's silliness, there's no holding back. And, you know, laughter, I think, is my love language. And so I think it really tickles my soul that we laugh so much.

And I think what makes our relationship so special is that we have similar-ish backgrounds and similar barriers, obviously different but similar. And just, I don't know, we've just always been there for each other. And we've always been able to talk about problems, and issues, and celebrate each other, but in a way that has always felt permanent. Like I never felt like we would not be friends, even from the very beginning.

So I was like, "Okay, you might go to a different school, you'll go to a different state, but we would always be friends." And so I think it's that anchor that I think really makes my friendship with you special because it just, it always feels like permanent, like Alpha and the Omega.

Kaneisha: Oh, yes. I don't know what Alpha and the Omega is, but I'll take it. I know it's the beginning and I think the end of the alphabet.

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JJ: It's some sort of biblical thing, but yeah,

Kaneisha: Okay.

JJ: I think Jesus calls himself the Alpha and the Omega and so, you know.

Kaneisha: Yeah. I love it, he's quoting the Bible. But I love it. JJ did you listen to the Assumption of Permanence episode?

JJ: Oh, I did. I did.

Kaneisha: Yeah, so we totally have that in our friendship for sure. And I do think that that means a lot. That there's literally no fight that could ever happen, or slight that could ever happen to where we wouldn't be friends. Like, I don't even know, I could literally, I don't know, I feel like I could borrow \$50,000 from you and not pay it back. And you'd be like, "I mean, I guess I was stupid for giving it to her."

JJ: Yeah, step one, do not give out money.

Kaneisha: Yeah, you know what? Oprah said lending money is a quick way to end a friendship. She said something like you basically purchase the end of a friendship when you lend large amounts of money. If you're going to have some money dealings, just give it.

JJ: Just give it away, exactly.

Kaneisha: Yeah, and so that was really beautiful. And I love that, that idea of permanence. And I think that it's particularly impactful since both of us have been married, or domestically partnered, basically married before. And so we really know that sometimes things that we plan to be permanent, don't end up being permanent. And to have something in our life, our friendship that is permanent, is really wonderful.

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And you also referenced that we grew up similarly. So, JJ and I grew up in Dove Springs in Austin, Texas. A low income, high crime neighborhood. It's not a scary place, it's just poor. And it's sleepy, the crimes that happen are, as far as I know, more like theft, and property crime, and vandalism and things like that. But it's not like people are getting murdered and shot in the streets very often, like it does happen.

So let's talk about how we grew up. What are some things you would share with the listeners? And just think about the people who will listen to this episode. There may be friends of yours in Seattle, who will be listening to this episode who they only know rich, white-passing JJ, right? And not saying that you're hiding any other part of yourself or whatever. But there are people who only think of me as Kaneisha who runs a 700k to a million-dollar business or whatever.

So there will be people who are listening to this episode who have known both of us for years who don't really know how we grew up. So for those people, or for people who don't know us at all, what would you tell them about, you know, where we grew up, and how we grew up?

JJ: You know, similar to what you said, like low income where, you know, everyone I knew growing up always had money issues, you know. You know, rent might have been hard to make or, you know, a car broke down and you couldn't afford to fix it. Buying something expensive was like out of the question. I guess how I know people didn't grow up like we did is when people always reference like entertainment systems they had as a kid. Like, "I had the Nintendo." Or "I had an Xbox." And I was like my parents absolutely did not have money for that.

We never went without food or shelter, obviously. But we just never had extra money for things. And that was the case with like everyone I knew, including all my family. So I guess, you know, growing up low income or

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poor felt fine because everyone else we knew was poor and low income, I think.

Kaneisha: Yeah, I don't think I knew -

JJ: It never felt frantic or like it never felt like I was missing something because all of us were missing something I guess.

Kaneisha: For sure, I don't think I knew that we lived in a low-income neighborhood. I don't think I really understood that until we were in high school.

JJ: Yeah, because we never knew other parts of the town existed.

Kaneisha: Right, we were just like, "Austin is just this like dilapidated wasteland."

JJ: This ghetto, yeah, wanna-be ghetto.

Kaneisha: Yeah, no, and I don't want to say that. Our neighborhood was not and is not a wasteland.

JJ: No.

Kaneisha: I'm just being silly. And I also want to point out that JJ and I grew up in a low-income neighborhood that had the highest teen pregnancy rate in the nation when we were growing up.

JJ: Hello, let's celebrate that.

Kaneisha: But JJ we did not grow up poor. You know, like we had two parents.

JJ: We did.

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Kaneisha: Your parents went to college and so did mine. Mine graduated, I know your mom did. Did your dad graduate college?

JJ: No.

Kaneisha: Okay. He did go though, right?

JJ: I don't think so actually.

Kaneisha: Okay. I don't know why I have this vision that he went like for some college.

JJ: He might have gone for like a semester or something and then was like, "I'm out."

Kaneisha: And like you said, we never went without food. And actually in my house, we were big consumers. So I did have -

JJ: Oh, y'all had those burritos.

Kaneisha: We did have great frozen burritos that JJ loved. We had an overabundance in my house of stuff and food, which was challenging, because there is the challenge of not enough. But then sometimes when people like my parents grow up in scarcity, they then overstock up and it gets to the point of near or actual hoarding.

And so one challenge for me growing up was like, there was too much stuff a lot of the time. So we did, I had a lot of toys, all the books I could want. Every gaming console I wanted. I wasn't super into it, but I know I had the Atari, I had Nintendo. I don't know if I had anything -

JJ: You had every computer in the world.

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Kaneisha: We had so many computers because my dad is like a big computer nerd. We had so many computers, and my dad still does. If you ever just need a TV, literally, you know, I'll come back from Spain and be like, "I need a TV." And the next day my dad's like, "Here's two from the garage." Yeah, I have never known people to love Black Friday more than the Grayson's.

JJ: Yeah, it's up there with popcorn.

Kaneisha: Yeah, we love popcorn and Black Friday.

JJ: I would say, you're right, like I have both my parents. They were married, they both always had jobs. We always owned a home, you know, we never had to move frequently. And so I was very fortunate in that. But I think one of the things that I noticed moving on in life is that, you know, because my mother was the only one to have gone to college in my entire family, and I mean entire family.

Kaneisha: I didn't know that, that's amazing.

JJ: All extended family, everybody.

Kaneisha: And I remember your mom, my parents grew up as migrant farm workers picking fruit. And your white mom grew up picking cotton?

JJ: No, she didn't, but her parents did.

Kaneisha: Oh, her parents did. Okay.

JJ: My mom never grew up on a farm.

Kaneisha: I thought she did. Okay, her parents did.

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JJ: I mean, they took her to the farm to be like, “Look at what you could have done.” And she was like -

Kaneisha: Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's good. Okay, I thought she did, okay.

JJ: But my parents never, even though my mom was a teacher, my mom and dad never knew how to like, I guess, support us educationally. Like I distinctly remember going to middle school and the teacher being like, “Okay, everyone get on the internet.” And I was like, “What is the internet?” Like we didn't have a computer until I was like a freshman in high school.

Kaneisha: You should have asked my dad for one.

JJ: I should have been like, “Mr. Grayson, can you build me a custom computer please?” No, but things like that, like my parents were like, “I don't know how to navigate the internet. I don't know how to help you like do research projects online.”

Kaneisha: Same.

JJ: All of that stuff was -

Kaneisha: I mean my dad definitely could help me navigate the internet, but research projects, no.

JJ: Yeah, so all of that, I think that's similar to what you said. Like when I got to high school, and actually in middle school, and all those like fancy kids at Kealing, it just became abundantly clear that like while I wasn't like poor poor necessarily in material things, like how to navigate other parts of life I was like, “I don't know how to do any of this.”

Kaneisha” Absolutely. So I talk about that with my clients is social capital. We were poor in a certain type of social capital. Kind of the Rich Dad Poor Dad type situation where our dads and moms gave us a lot of love, and fed

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us, and gave us shelter but they kind of hit a limit of what they could give us when it came to navigating climbing social classes.

JJ: Oh yes, for sure.

Kaneisha: Which sounds pretty gross the way I'm saying it, but we really have come a really long way socioeconomically. My parents grew up as migrant farm workers. Then they both got migrant farm worker scholarships to go to college. Graduated from college, and then worked in government jobs. Retired from government jobs. Both your parents are retired from their professional jobs.

And now I think we're both in very similar income bracket households, DINK households, dual income no kids. And we talked about it before the call, both of our households make a combined each like about 350k to 500k a year. Right? That's a lot, I always go crazy, like that's a million dollars every two to four years.

JJ: Yeah, It really is. I mean, and again, growing up I remember when I became a nurse, I was like, "I make more than my parents make." You know, at the end of their careers, which is crazy.

Kaneisha: Yeah, I make, by myself I make I think double what my parents made combined when they retired. So yeah, we live in very abundant households. I feel rich, I don't know if we count as rich. Like I don't, is let's just say 400k, is a 400k household in the US does that count as rich? I know making 400k one person would put you in the 1%. But I just, I think it counts right? Like when I put my income into the little Wall Street Journal What Percent Are You calculator mine is the top 2% of income or the 98th percentile.

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JJ: Yeah. Well, I think it's a good comparison, right? Like, our friendship is an assumption of permanence. In my mind, my income is not an assumption of permanent

Kaneisha: Oh, me neither.

JJ: You know what I mean? Like, I'm like, "Okay, this is a good year, but the famines coming." And I don't know if that's just because that's how we grew up. And I don't know anyone else that personally who's like, "Money has always come and so they just count on it." Like the sunrise rises in the west? What is it again?

Kaneisha: The sun rises in the east.

JJ: Okay.

Kaneisha: But yeah, the sun sets in the west, and they make money upon money. Yeah, and their wealth grows. JJ I'm right there with you. I was actually just having a conversation with Tyler about this before our interview. And I'm like, I'm feeling a little down because we're having a low February and a low March in the business. But I just remember that's how I felt last year because the pandemic had just started. And I was like, "Well, I might go out of business and it's been a good run."

And so I'm like, okay, every March people aren't feeling a sense of urgency to sign up and work with us to get help. Although they should be because you should sign up as early as possible so we can help you get great results. But it's the same month when I'm hearing all the great news from my clients, and they're like, "Oh my goodness Kaneisha, I just got into University of Virginia with a full scholarship." And I'm like, "That's so exciting. Where's my money?" Not from that person, but just in general.

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And so I feel a real gap between the results I help people achieve and the money that's coming in every March. Every March, and I just got to get used to it. But I do, every March, I have to deal with, let's call it February, March, April, I start to be like, "Oh, am I going to be poor? Is everything okay? Do I have enough money?" And really have to very intentionally keep myself out of scarcity.

I'm so glad you brought that up. Because I don't even know that I realized we had that in common, the fact that we live in such abundant households. That we earn six figures, each of us, and that we still kind of are looking over our shoulder, wondering when we're going to go have to work at, for me and you like we both worked our first two jobs together at the movie theater and at the grocery store. Are we going to have to like, go work at Starbucks or be like a janitor in the same hospital that you're a nurse, right? You know?

JJ: In my mind, I think if I had to define what a rich person is versus not, my money is tied to my ability, my human physical hours. Whereas a rich person is not tied to what they can physically do.

Kaneisha: Absolutely.

JJ: To me that's why.

Kaneisha: Absolutely. So wealth, right? The wealthy people don't make money from showing up to a job. Wealthy people make money with the money they already have being invested, then reinvested and growing, and then being reinvested. They're not making money by clocking in, clocking out, their ability to earn money is not tied to, like you said, their physical exertion of effort.

And so that's something for both of us, I think to, not that the accumulation of wealth is the most important thing in life, but it is important. And it's

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important to us, I think we both really like the bougee lifestyles we have become accustomed to. Which we'll talk about that as-

JJ: I love a bubble water.

Kaneisha: I love a bubble water too; I didn't used to but I'm totally on the bubble water train now. And that's something I think we'll both keep working on, is just better understanding money management, feeling confident with money management, investing our money and not being afraid of the stock market. Yes, I'm talking about investing and I see a piece of art behind you. Isn't that like a legit piece of art? Like isn't that one of y'all's investments?

JJ: Yes, my husband does all the art investing. He picks all the art, hangs them up. I'm just like that, he always jokes that I'm going to be that rich widow where they come out and be like, "Madam, your investments." And I'm like, "I know nothing of this vulgarity, just give me my check." And I was like, "Yes, that's exactly my plan."

Kaneisha: Yeah. And actually I have art behind me.

JJ: You do.

Kaneisha: JJ I don't know if you remember those two small pieces. Do you remember where those come from?

JJ: I can't even see them, but no.

Kaneisha: Oh, you're involved in this story. So you took me, we were in Miami, we were in South Beach and you took me to your friend's house. And it was like a young guy and a much older guy. And the older guy was a surgeon and I was admiring all his art and just drooling over his art. And I was like, "The art in your house, to me, looks like you love Picasso." And

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he was like, “Oh, yes I do.” And then like while y'all were hanging out, he took me to his like private -

JJ: Back room.

Kaneisha: Yeah, his private back room and showed me his Picasso's, his real Picasso's that he has. And then he asked for my address and sent me these two pieces. They are not Picasso's, but they are a Cuban artist. And this is like, legit, you know, high art, invest your money art type stuff with resale value, framed in some Hobby Lobby frames.

JJ: Boujee on a budget.

Kaneisha: Boujee on a budget. But yeah, that's the story of the art that you see behind me.

JJ: I remember this.

Kaneisha: And then one of my favorite JJ phrases ever, I don't remember how it came up or how it was born. But you referred to us one day as the way we grew up was free range ghetto.

JJ: Oh yes.

Kaneisha: What does free range ghetto mean?

JJ: Free range ghetto is, okay, so if you're not from a warm climate, in Texas our schools aren't necessarily entirely enclosed. We'll have courtyards where you can sit and there's trees. And it's free-range ghetto in that like you can just like mill in between the buildings, and I don't know there was also like not a perimeter of our school. Like there was a neighborhood across the street and if I just was like, “I'm done of second period.” I could just get up and like walk away into the neighborhood.

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So free range ghetto is they trusted us enough to be like, you're cattle that knows you're either going to come or go as you please. And we're not that concerned about your safety. And I was like, "Okay." But I love free range ghetto because there was no, I don't know, I felt like we weren't in prison like in some other poor places where you feel trapped.

Kaneisha: Absolutely.

JJ: Yeah.

Kaneisha: I think I love your description of free-range ghetto. And I think one of the things that we were really fortunate to not experience as we went to low-income schools for elementary school, middle school, and high school, low-income public schools. But we were not treated as if we were being trained to tolerate imprisonment.

JJ: Exactly.

Kaneisha: Which a lot of times in public schools with a really high proportion of low-income students, there's just this extreme disciplinarian, authoritarian atmosphere. Whereas for us, it was just like, "I mean, thanks for being here for part of the day."

JJ: You showed up and you don't have a baby with you, kudos.

Kaneisha: Right. Yeah. And we had places for the babies, even in middle school. You know, we had the -

JJ: Yeah, remember we had that little daycare, they had a little spot in the yearbook.

Kaneisha: The daycare, for our children.

JJ: For our student's children, was like, "Hello."

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Kaneisha: Yeah.

JJ: It was a very relaxed ghetto, I must say.

Kaneisha: Yeah, it was, it was. I'm happy to have had that experience of, we've just really experienced a wide range of life in America. Right? So let's talk about growing up gay in the ghetto.

JJ: Yeah, so I feel like I've always been, as Kaneisha mentioned, a chubby, tanned, sparkly eyed person.

Kaneisha: JJ is very, very fit.

JJ: I'm very thin and white now.

Kaneisha: He's very handsome.

JJ: I'm the Edward Cullen to my Jacob now or whatever, for the Twilight fans. So yeah, growing up gay, I'm so gay that literally everybody I think for the most part was like, "This is who you are. It's not really a question." I don't think, Kaneisha remembers more of this than I do, I don't think I was ever like... I don't remember being actively bullied as a kid for being gay. I think I remember people pointing it out.

Kaneisha: Yeah.

JJ: More in just like curiosity or like, "Something's not right with that duckling." But never like, I was never physically harmed for being gay in the ghetto. And I think it also has something to do with the free-range ghetto. Like, who has the time and energy to bully a chubby Latino gay boy when they don't have food on their table?

Kaneisha: That's right.

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JJ: Or their mother is a crackhead. Like, they had bigger fish to fry. So I know Kaneisha remembers some more of those things.

Kaneisha: Yeah, I do. I'm so happy to hear that you were never physically attacked for being gay. And this, I don't know, this isn't PC to say, I don't know how to say it. But like, you are like, very obviously gay, effeminate and I don't know, I'm sure I'm saying all the wrong things and I'm get canceled.

JJ: Are we going to get canceled? Is this our canceled episode? As elder millennials it was bound to happen.

Kaneisha: Yeah, in 15 years I'll be like famous. And they'll be like, "She said he's obviously gay. Did you assume his gayness?" But you're very obviously gay.

JJ: Yeah.

Kaneisha: And my memories are similar to yours. Not of people physically attacking you, but very verbally labeling you. So just, you know, we'd be walking around the neighborhood and kids would yell from 20 feet away, you know, "Yo, you walk like a girl." Or like, you know, "You gay."

JJ: And I'd be like, "Go on." Or like, you know what I mean?

Kaneisha: Right. And at the time, as far as I knew you weren't, you know, out to your family or out to me. And you said you were straight and I'm like, "Okay, he's straight." And also, I just didn't, at that age I'm just excited, I'm just barely even, "Who am I?" So not super interested in being like, "Oh, who's gay, who's not gay?" Whatever. But I do remember in sixth grade, the first time my mom met you, you walked me out to the van. I think it was that green with the -

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JJ: That green van, yeah with the sliding doors.

Kaneisha: With the sliding door. And you introduced yourself to my mom and then you like sauntered away. And you like, you know, closed the door for me and sauntered away. My mom's like, "Oh, what a nice little gay boy." And I just remember being like, "Oh my God. Mom, he is not gay." And just like, that was like, a whole thing, right, during middle school and a lot of high school of me being like, "JJ is not gay." Not because I thought that being gay was wrong, but because it was like, "Well, he says he's not gay so like, leave him alone."

JJ: Yeah.

Kaneisha: Yeah. Another thing I would say about growing up gay in the ghetto. Is that we had a lot of gay people in the ghetto.

JJ: Okay, can we please, and we're going to get canceled for this, but can we talk about the number of like butch, like ghetto lesbians we had.

Kaneisha: Butch Black lesbians, yes.

JJ: Yes, like who were just like living their truths in high school and middle school where everyone's like, "Obviously she's gay. Who cares?"

Kaneisha: Who cares?

JJ: He's a man, who cares.

Kaneisha: That's so interesting. And I don't know if Black butch lesbians get the accolades, and attention, and recognition they deserve for being, to me Black butch lesbians are some of the most unapologetically queer people that I have ever known.

JJ: Oh, absolutely.

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Kaneisha: And from very young ages, right?

JJ: Oh, yeah. Like in middle school and high school. Like I remember in middle school like, "She's a lesbian, she's a friend if I need it."

Kaneisha: Yeah. And like, who going to pick on them?

JJ: Who is going to pick on them? Exactly.

Kaneisha: Yeah.

JJ: It's true. It's like and again, about the free-range ghetto, in any of those classic high school tropes of like the nerds and the jocks, like I feel like because everybody was poor and it was so hot, we were like, "Nobody has time."

Kaneisha: Nobody was cool, nobody was popular, right? We had, I think, multiple pregnant cheerleaders. Our football players couldn't win a football, I think they won like two games, the whole four years of high school.

JJ: We were happy just to be in school.

Kaneisha: We were happy to just still be in school and to have made it to high school and through high school.

JJ: Yeah.

Kaneisha: And so yeah, let's talk about the evolution of your queer identity.

JJ: My gayness.

Kaneisha: Yeah, what does it mean to be queer to you? And also, let's also talk about intersectionality, of being Latino, being multiracial, and being queer.

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JJ: Yeah. So I feel like for me, I've always known I was gay ever since I was a little kid, just like not even a question. I've always, always been attracted to men as long as I can remember. And so, you know, I came out to Kaneisha when we were 16.

Kaneisha: On a field trip.

JJ: Yeah, thank you. FMLA, no not FMLA, that's family medical leave. What was it? FBLA?

Kaneisha: FBLA, future business leaders of America.

JJ: Yes, it was like Dallas or Houston.

Kaneisha: We were in Houston at the Galleria mall and the mall was closed down [crosstalk]. We were staying at a hotel inside of the Galleria mall, so we could still walk around the mall even though it was closed.

JJ: Yeah, so I came out to Kaneisha, and then by default like the rest of high school. Because I think you were the most important person I'd want to come out to. And so I came out to you, and then I didn't come out to my family until I left for college because I didn't know what would happen. Kaneisha and I even had a plan that if I came out to my parents and I got kicked out of my house, we had a whole kind of plan worked out. None of that happened, my parents are very supportive. But just the idea that I had to think about those sorts of things, which I think a lot of gay people can relate to.

So I came out in high school and then was fully gay in college, full-fledged gay in college. And then I think now the reason I would say that I'm gay but like I would definitely embrace the queer title is because I think I care less now about like, masculine feminine qualities. I mean, my pronouns matter

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please call me he, him, and his. But people frequently call me ma'am, her, and that truly doesn't bother me. It not so tied to my identity.

Kaneisha: So say a little bit more about that, when you say people refer to... I love telling these stories. And it also seems like it's a high proportion of Black people refer to you as like she or ma'am.

JJ: Absolutely

Kaneisha: And they're not doing it in a mocking way. It's literally like, they just look at you, they're interacting with you. They see your facial hair, but your spirit.

JJ: My spirit is genderless. So for all intents and purposes I look like a man. I have, you know, traditionally men's haircut. I traditionally wear men's clothing. But to my face, people will be like, "Thank you, ma'am. Oh no, I mean, sir." And I'm just like, you know, "Thank you for being polite." It truly doesn't matter.

And again, older Black women in the hospital love to call me ma'am by accident and then be just like, "Oh, no." And we all laugh and scream at the, you know, "Oh, I called him ma'am by accident." On the phone I get called ma'am. Small children will come up to me and be like, "What is your gender?"

Kaneisha: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Small children have definitely come up to JJ like, "Are you a girl or a boy?"

JJ: And I'm just like, "Who has time to answer such questions?" So I guess for me that's why, you know, I can embrace queerness and that as long as you're respectful to me, it truly doesn't matter what you call me. Because I don't feel such a strong identity to one or the other. And again, I don't feel

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gender queer to make that distinction. I feel like a man but I'm not so married to those terms and ideas.

Yeah, and then I think my, you know, my broad expansion of who I find sexy. You know, women are beautiful. Am I sexually attracted to women? Probably not, but you know it's the new millennium so it's whatever. So that's why I think... I'm a gay man with like, queer overtones.

Kaneisha: For sure. And I love that. And so okay, so you're a gay man with queer overtones?

JJ: Yeah.

Kaneisha: Okay, interesting. I don't quite understand the difference.

JJ: So there's also, you know, in our communities' transgender men and women, sometimes people make distinctions of who I'm attracted to determines how I identify as a person. And I am attracted to all men, trans men, cis men. And so I think, you know, traditionally gay men have had a kind of a narrow scope of who they're attracted to and what that means.

Kaneisha: Yeah.

JJ: So I think I adopt more of the gay men with queer leanings. Because at the end of the day, you know, it's who I'm attracted to. And how they identify doesn't necessarily change how I identify myself.

Kaneisha: Understood. Yeah, I think I would say I'm a straight woman, bi-curious, poly-curious.

JJ: Yeah.

Kaneisha: I'm just like, I don't know, it all sounds fun to me.

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JJ: Yeah, labels take a lot of time for me. So I'm like, I'm just going to have a good time and I'll check my box later.

Kaneisha: Yeah, I've definitely been like, "So Tyler, I would like to reserve the right sometime in the future to sleep with some women and some multiple people." And he's like, "We'll figure it out in the future."

JJ: So that's kind of been my gay queer journey. You know, it's very similar to many gay people in America during that time period of like coming out, being a little afraid, finding your community, and then really settling into yourself as an adult. So I love being a gay person. I feel like because I'm gay, my family...

So also as a caveat, as a gay Latino person, I present white. And I feel like when growing up the only gay people I saw were like butch Black lesbians, and like white gay men. And so, often I associated being white and being gay as like the culture I would gravitate towards, because I never really saw gay Latino people. And so that caused a bit of confusion in that. For the longest time I felt conflicted about my biracial identity because I feel like to be accepted as a gay person I had to be in white spaces. Which I think only now I'm really kind of delving into. But that's kind of the background, gay Latino, free range ghetto.

Kaneisha: For sure. For sure. And you know, JJ, we actually did have some very out gay Latino people in our high school. I won't use his name.

JJ: Oh yes.

Kaneisha: But if you remember there was a guy that was older than us, and he wore makeup.

JJ: Oh, yeah. I do remember that.

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Kaneisha: But he was pretty ostracized even at our very free-range ghetto accepting school. And to be clear of how I would say, in general, how gay positive our school was, JJ, being all his gay self was our Homecoming king and prom king?

JJ: Prom king and Homecoming prince the year before.

Kaneisha: Oh, that's amazing. Right?

JJ: Yeah.

Kaneisha: So we did not go to one of those scary high schools on TV where kids are getting pushed into lockers and the football players are bullies. I think those high schools exist, but that was not the kind of experience we had. We were friends with our teachers, went out to eat with our teachers. Yeah. And we had like an out, I don't remember what it was called, but it was like out loud gay club.

JJ: We had, oh my god this was so, so the young kids now won't appreciate this. But back in our day, there was a gay straight alliance, and it was secret. And to be a part of it, you had to like interview one on one with the counselor who was a very militant lesbian, tiny militant white woman. And you had to like get accepted into it, because you had to promise that you wouldn't out everybody else in the group.

Kaneisha: Oh, that's wonderful.

JJ: It was like a secret cool kid's club where we'd meet and be like, "We're gay, we're outcasts." But not really, because everyone's an outcast in the ghetto. But I do remember that, whereas now like, you know, the Out Loud Club would do fundraisers on the streets. But back then it was very much like it was a secret because people weren't out and had things to lose, so it was fun.

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Kaneisha: That's super cool. I knew we had the club, but I didn't know how to get into it, I was too busy running the Christian club. Yeah, now I'm like, it's funny somebody from, I'm going to be interviewed on one of my friend's from Harvard podcast. We somehow started talking about how we identify religiously and I was like, "I'm a millennial psychic witch." He was like, "Okay, tell me about that."

JJ: Yes, absolutely.

Kaneisha: Okay, and I can share more on a different episode about my identity as a millennial psychic Black witch.

JJ: And you have to bring up Salt and Pepper dreadlocks. So that's for a later episode.

Kaneisha: Oh definitely and who I'll be in the apocalypse. So speaking of the apocalypse, the apocalypse is a topic of great interest in our friend group. We have spent 20 years, you and I, JJ, in a four-person best friendship. Me, you, Meghan and Leah. The four of us have spent hours and hours and hours talking about the apocalypse. Who we would be during the apocalypse? Who would be in our survival tribe? What our job would be.

JJ: Absolutely.

Kaneisha: And then the apocalypse actually happened in 2020, the coronavirus pandemic. And shelter in place began in March 2020. And by the end of April our best friend Leah had died.

And so I want to just talk about grief and loss. And even just the idea of grief interrupted. It's been nearly a year since Leah died, and we haven't even had a chance to properly memorialize her. I haven't seen you in person since Leah died. I haven't seen Megan in person. We haven't had a

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funeral for Leah. So I just, I don't know, I just want to talk about that and remember Leah. And we miss Leah. And also sometimes feels like she is still like, just busy or something, right? And that we'll just see her soon.

So, I don't know, what would you say to the person listening about how you've handled your grief about losing Leah?

JJ: I would say, you know, as a nurse I've dealt with death all the time, part of a daily job. I expect death, not in a morbid way but like I know everyone I know and love will die eventually. Whether before me or after me.

Kaneisha: After you.

JJ: Yeah.

Kaneisha: We all agree JJ is going to live forever.

JJ: Forever. We'll talk about that later. But so for me death is, it's still always tragic when it happens but I'm not shocked like, "Oh no, how could someone have died?" Like that part of grief and death is not in my framework. But I think specifically, you know, during the pandemic it feels oddly selfish for me to bring up that one of our best friends died, because everyone has known someone that's died in the pandemic and we're all grieving. And, you know, we're mourning the loss of this year together as a global community.

And so it feels oddly selfish to bring up Leah for me personally. Because I know everyone is struggling, and everyone has something. And that's my own take on it.

But in terms of grief, you know, I feel like grief is best described like, I don't know, like a tulip you might plant. You try and bury it; you try and not look at it. But eventually it's going to come back. It'll grow, it'll sprout up out of

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the ground. And sometimes it's beautiful and, you know, grief reminds you of a beautiful memory that you have and you laugh. And sometimes grief reminds you of something terrible that you miss and it's devastating.

And so, you know, I take grief as it comes. You can't grab it, you can't hold it, you can't jar it up, it just comes out however it's going to come out. So in that way I have no expectations of grief. It'll just happen when it happens. And I'll react the way I react.

And that's kind of how I navigate life. And again, being a nurse has helped quite a bit in knowing that the unexpected will happen all the time at any moment. And you just have to be ready for that. So yeah, I don't know, it feels like you said, we haven't seen each other in real life. And I feel like when we do see each other in real life and remember Leah it'll just be every emotion, all the emotions, and I do look forward for that release.

Kaneisha: Yeah, I look forward to the release. But I feel afraid of feeling that sad. You know, like, I'm going to cry now, you know, like just thinking about it. I've cried a lot over losing Leah and losing my mom. And just the idea of crying with you and Megan in person, it's just overwhelming. You know, just to feel that sad.

JJ: It will be but, you know, we always make everything into a fun joke. And so like I said, when we get together, we're going to hold each other, and cry, and just like rock back and forth like witches conjuring a spell. And then dissolve into laughter and it'll be great, and sad, and wonderful. So, you know, like I said, it's so weird to lose someone during a pandemic. But, I mean, that's life. And you know, that's, yeah.

Kaneisha: It was, is, a real shock, a huge shock. And it was also, like, my greatest fear come true. You know, I had just been talking to you just days, maybe a week before Leah died about how afraid I was of the virus and just everything that was going on.

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And so, I don't know, it's interesting to realize that sometimes your worst nightmare can come true. You know, like especially for high achievers we have a false sense of control over our lives. We have control, of course we all have control over decisions we make, actions we take or don't take, laws we choose to break or not break. But when it comes to life and death, like we don't get to decide when our mom dies. We don't get to decide when our best friend dies, or when we die. And it's important to just remember that. And I feel like Leah, more than any of us in the four-person friend group did what she wanted to do. Right?

JJ: She did.

Kaneisha: Like without caring about what other people think. Some of the things that I carry with me from Leah is like she really knew how to relax and take it easy.

JJ: Mm-hmm.

Kaneisha: And yeah, she really, you know, she worked really hard at work and in her jobs and was a star performer.

JJ: She did.

Kaneisha: I think she was good at not over identifying with her work and feeling like, "Oh, this is who I am." You know? With me as an entrepreneur I could easily be like, you know, if my business is doing great, I'm great. If my business is not doing great, like I'm not so great.

JJ: And you know, I think those two things tie in well together for me. Why I'm drawn to the overachievers is because it's that constant clinging and grasping onto something that is truly not graspable, right? Like, you can't hold on to your grief, you can't tell it when to come up. You can't always predict everything, and it's so freeing.

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My personal joy in life is to have a high achiever, high achieving person understand that letting go is the only way to truly have control. Because you can't control anything and releasing that last desire to control is truly how you're able to control. Because you control your mind and how you feel. Everything else is, you know, dust in the wind or whatever.

Kaneisha; Okay, Zen wisdom with JJ.

JJ: Yeah.

Kaneisha: Okay, so let's start to wrap up. As a recap, today, JJ, we talked about how we are soulmates and we've been traveling through the universe for millennia, finding our way to each other in each lifetime.

JJ: That's right.

Kaneisha: We talked about why you surround yourself with high achievers. We talked about -

JJ: I'm a spiritual vampire.

Kaneisha: No, not because you're a spiritual vampire, but there's some good energetic synchronicity between your calm energy, and your nurturing energy, and our, our meaning high achievers, kind of frantic, grasping, nothing is ever enough energy. You're able to kind of calm us down but you also like our go-getter energy.

JJ: I love it.

Kaneisha: We talked about our friendship and what it's meant to us. We've talked about growing up free range ghetto, and the positive aspects of that. Growing up gay in the ghetto, and how it was really different than how maybe people might think or how it might be portrayed on television shows.

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We talked about what it means to be queer, intersectionality and queerness, evolution of your queer identity.

And we talked about how we're rich now, but still we don't have an Assumption of Permanence. We do not have an, neither of us with our socioeconomic status, there's still that fear that we could slide back and have to struggle. Our grief, right? Our shared grief over losing Leah and how we deal with that. Let's close out with some self-care tips. You are the queen of self-care.

JJ: Absolutely.

Kaneisha: You're also friends, as we've talked about, with lots of super type A people who could use more self-care in their life. Can you share with us some self-care practices, with the Scale Your Joy listeners?

JJ: Absolutely.

Kaneisha: Tell us about some simple ones and some of the more complex ones.

JJ: Absolutely. The simple one is saying, "no" more. I feel like the more I say no to people, and tasks, and asks of me the more time I have for myself.

Kaneisha: Mm-hmm.

JJ: Another one is the basic things. I make myself delicious food all the time because, you know, it's nurturing to my body, it's something we need every day. And it's a simple thing you can do. We have to eat every day, so you might as well do it. Showering, I have a simple shower routine. I exfoliate twice a week, I moisturize a lot, I stay hydrated.

Kaneisha: It doesn't sound so simple.

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JJ: No, that's simple. You have to shower every day.

Kaneisha: But yeah, okay, go ahead. No, it's good.

JJ: I give myself permission to do nothing.

Kaneisha: Yes.

JJ: Like I have unstructured time where I'm like, I can just read, I can take a nap. I can play a video game. I can literally stare out the window and look at bird for 20 minutes while I sip a cup of coffee. I can just exist for that hour. I don't need to justify my existence by being productive. That is a simple one.

Kaneisha: That's a big one. I have so much trouble giving myself permission to do nothing. It's a real problem.

JJ: Living is enough.

Kaneisha: Living is enough. We are human beings, not human doings.

JJ: That's right. So those are my simple ones. The more exaggerated ones are, you know, exfoliate my whole body, shave everything, lotion up. Sit in the middle of my king-sized bed with my cat next to me with a cup of tea and like read luxuriously for two hours.

Kaneisha: Oh, that sounds amazing.

JJ: I love it.

Kaneisha: We'll do that next time we're together. We'll just be completely hairless, covered and slathered in lotion, wearing like silk gowns.

JJ: Lotion gloves.

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Kaneisha: Silk like house gowns.

JJ: Yeah, so it doesn't remove the moisture from our hair.

Kaneisha: Yeah. And read, that sounds amazing. And pet your cat. That's amazing.

JJ: So yeah, those are my self-care. And what's another good one?

Kaneisha: Well just even you make a lot of things. You make candles from scratch. You make your own tofu.

JJ: Y'all, tofu is the easiest thing to make. It's water, soybeans, and lime juice. What is that?

Kaneisha: I just thought tofu came from the grocery store.

JJ: It does but, you know, you can make it. And I will say this, I love to cook so that's why it's nourishing to me. If you hate to cook, don't cook, do something else.

Kaneisha: Don't turn it into a high achieving perfectionist task.

JJ: Absolutely. I give myself permission to make mistakes all the time.

Kaneisha: Permission to make mistakes. Permission to not be perfect.

JJ: Absolutely. We're not perfect beings. I love my body, I actively stand in the mirror naked, shake my belly and say, "I love you. You're my ancestor's emergency preparedness kit in the family."

Kaneisha: Oh, I love it. Okay, so that leads us into our joy work for this episode. One of your joy work tasks is to stand naked in front of the mirror and jiggle the things that jiggle, that maybe you wish didn't jiggle. And say,

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“Thank you, my jiggle. You are my ancestor’s emergency preparedness kit.” I love it. That’s amazing.

What are some things that the skill your joy listeners can journal, doodle, and noodle on related to our episode today, JJ? I know you love to journal. So what’s one or two things they could journal, doodle, and noodle on?

JJ: I think one thing they can journal on is gratitude. So just journal about what they’re grateful of. Work, life, love, profession, just a whole section on gratitude. And then a second one, which I find helpful is to journal about something you’re curious about on yourself. A topic, an identity you struggle with or are thinking of. Just inquisitive about yourself.

Journal about yourself as if you are reading a book, and you were like frantically writing annotated notes in the book. Like what does the author mean? Ask yourself, “What do you mean when you do and say these things?” So just a quick little self-analytical portion but not as a homework task of like I have to get an A on this. But just pure curiosity about yourself. So one about gratitude and one about self-discovery.

Kaneisha: Oh, that is beautiful. I love that homework. Thank you for giving us our joy work for this episode. And thank you for being my amazing soulmate, my wife in the former life, and my JJ bestie in this life. I love you so much, JJ.

JJ: I love you too, Kaneisha. I can’t wait till we’re genderless robots in the next life.

Kaneisha: Oh, I would love that. Yeah, just keep all my parts well oiled.

JJ: Okay, self-care 101.

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This was *Scale Your Joy* with Kaneisha Grayson, episode eight. Have a wonderful self-care filled week.

To celebrate the launch of the show I'm giving away a *Scale Your Joy* audio book eBook bundle. These are five hand-picked books that I have read and I love. They're about life, joy, and entrepreneurship, and five lucky listeners will be chosen to win.

The way you enter is you subscribe, rate, and review *Scale Your Joy* on Apple Podcasts. It doesn't have to be a five-star review, although I sure hope you're loving the show. I want your honest feedback so I can create an amazing show that provides tons of value.

Visit scaleyourjoy.com/welcome to learn more about the contest and how to enter. I'll be announcing the winners on the show in episode 11.