

Episode 15: My Answers to 10 Vulnerable Questions



Full Episode Transcript

[Scale Your Joy](#) with Kaneisha Grayson

Hello, hello, I hope your week is going well! And if it isn't, that this episode brings a bit of sparkle to your day.

Y'all know how I love a remix dinner where I take leftovers of one dish and turn it into another dish. Well today, I had to make a remix lunch, but first some just-for-fun social commentary for context for my remix lunch: I don't know if y'all have seen it, but on YouTube and Tiktok, there are all these interracial couples that are black women with white men. Lauren and Cameron of Love is Blind are an example. They're my favorite.

And a lot of the women like to make fun of their white boyfriends for not seasoning chicken enough. I am also one of those women.

Well, we had the opposite problem today in the Montgomery-Grayson household. I made me and Tyler grilled chicken for lunch. And while I plated the food beautifully, when it came time to actually eat it, the chicken breast was way too seasoned, like nearly inedible.

And Tyler was very sweet and decided to power through and eat his nasty, salty chicken that I made. But I do not believe in eating over salted foods.

So I took the rest of the salt-saturated chicken and I shredded it, and I made quesadillas instead. And the bland white cheese that I used, and that is traditionally used for quesadillas, it's usually oaxaca cheese, but I was out of oaxaca cheese. So I use mozzarella.

It was the perfect balance to my over-salted chicken. And I quite enjoyed my quesadillas, and now we have a lot of tasty shredded chicken for the week! So just know that if you over-salt the chicken, it can be saved by shredding it and combining it with something very bland. And it'll be a beautiful combination.

Alright, enough of Kaneisha's cooking tips. Today is a sharing episode. I don't have anything to teach you. I'm just here sharing a bit more about myself. And I hope that at least one thing that I share today will help you feel a little bit less alone, or validate you and something you've been wondering if other people feel too.

And so the questions that I'll be answering, I got them from a post published on Thought Catalog by the writer, poet and editor Marissa Donnelly, and it's called 37 Good Questions To Ask If You Want To Get Vulnerable With Someone You Love.

And of course I love all of you, all of my Scale Your Joy listeners. I really appreciate y'all. So, I am not going to answer all 37 questions because I would take forever. And I know that you all support me but I don't think you want to sit here and listen to the answers to 37 whole questions.

So I would think I'm gonna do 10, and my answers are completely unscripted. I'm just going to share off the top of my head and I hope that you find my responses somewhat engaging. I'll be as honest as I can be.

And I hope that it just helps you get to know me: Kaneisha Grayson, host to Scale Your Joy, founder of The Art of Applying, woman with hopes and dreams and fears a little bit better. All right, here we go.

Okay, what's the scariest thing you've ever done?

This question is hard because I don't feel like I do scary, dangerous things like climb mountains, or... I don't know what people do. Like, the only thing I can think of that's scary is climbing mountains. I don't do stuff like that. It seems very, it seems scary to me, it also seems like unnecessarily strenuous and dangerous.

But something scary for me, which sounds a little silly, but it is really, really hard and scary for me, is to share with a friend - usually female friends - if they've hurt my feelings. I have all kinds of difficult conversations in my business, I can have difficult conversations in romantic relationships.

But when it comes to particularly female friendships, and I have a good number of them, long ones, really close ones, even lighter-hearted, you know, ones where we are just more activity partners. But whatever the level of friendship is, it is still so scary and so hard for me to tell a friend if she's hurt my feelings or crossed my boundaries.

I will agonize about it, I will talk to my boyfriend about it, I will have a session with my therapist about it. I will journal about it, I will role play it by myself, I will roleplay it with other people. I will wring my hands. I will be like maybe it's okay and I don't need to say anything...

I will do all the things. And then when it's finally time to speak up and be like, hey, that thing that you said or did that hurt my feelings, it is so scary and so hard for me.

And I think the reason why it's scary is in the past many, many years ago, not anytime recently. But in the past when I was around like college age, there were a few times I told a friend that they hurt my feelings - and it's, I don't know how I communicated it because it was a really long time ago, but it just wasn't received well.

It was just kind of like the person was really defensive. And it was more about like, Oh it's my fault, I shouldn't feel that way. And I just was like, Let me shrink inside of my body and never tell someone when they hurt my feelings again!

So that's really scary for me. It's not the same as, you know, wrangling tigers or climbing mountains. But it's really scary and really hard for me to tell a female friend when she's hurt my feelings.

What's one moment that you wish you could rewind and replay 100 times?

One moment that I do rewind and replay a lot, and talk about, and like to reminisce about, is the first time Tyler told me that he loved me. I had already told him that I loved him and he wasn't ready to say it back. And I didn't really expect that he'd be ready to say it back when I said it.

But then as time went by, I think it was I don't know if it was one month, two months, three months, I really do not know. It was one month, two months, three months, it felt like to me an eternity.

I was getting very wound up and more and more hyper-analytical, upset about like, Why hasn't he said it back? And like, is he emotionally unavailable? I was getting really upset about it. I would bring it up to him occasionally, but I definitely didn't want to pressure someone into telling me that they love me.

So anyway, one day, he came over to my apartment, and he surprised me with flowers and I was very happy. I'm just like, Oh, yay, flowers, and was like trimming them and arranging them, putting them in a vase.

And then we ended up, you know, in the bedroom, as we so often did in those early days! And we were kissing and he was like, How do you feel? And I was like, I feel good. I feel happy. And he's like, good, I want you to feel good. I want you to feel happy, and I want you to feel loved.

And I was like Oh, he wants me to feel loved, interesting! And he was like, I love you. And I was like oh my heart. And then you know, I was kind of like in Lion King where they're like say it again, Mufasa! But of course, say it again - and you know, he told me he loved me again and again.

And it was just a really special moment, it was really sweet and very heartfelt. Because words of affirmation is really big for me! He probably said a lot of other sweet things. But I replay that moment, a lot because it was just like...it felt kind of like an event.

You know, like there were flowers and kissing all over and it was just - I felt very adored and it was really really nice. So yeah, that's something I like, I replay and rewind and reminisce with him - like, Remember when you brought me flowers and then told me you loved me?

And now he says it all the time. Like all the time, like maybe 27 times a day or more. So it's actually I'm having to increase my receiving ability to receive love because I have never in my life had any human, or angel, or ghou, tell me that they love me so much. So it's really lovely.

All right, when it's 3am, and you're all alone, what do you think about?

First of all, when it's 3am I'm asleep. I can barely stay awake past 10:35pm, I turn into Pumpkineisha. Eyes get droopy, I get sleepy and weepy, start feeling sad, and thinking about all the deep things in life.

So if somehow I've made it to 3am, I have had a lot of coffee - which a lot of coffee for me is one full cup. But anyway, let's say I'm up at 3am, and I'm all alone, I am definitely thinking about death.

I think about death all the time. I think about people who I love who have died, I think about what I think happens after you die, I think about, What does it feel like to die?

I think about - also, other things, and this is something I was thinking about and googling just last night. I think about how like, our entire life could easily just be a simulation.

I think about that all the time. I was googling, how do I know we're not actually in a simulation? And there's some interesting research that says that we don't actually know we're not in a computer simulation...

But anyway, if it's 3 AM, I'm either thinking about my death, I say what's not my death - the death of people really close to me and how that would feel, or I'm thinking about what happens after you die. Or I'm thinking about, How do we know this isn't a simulation? ...I totally think this is a simulation.

So that's what I think about. Me and my maternal Grandma, my mom's mom, we talked about death a fair amount. And like when my mom was still alive we used to talk about it, me and my grandma, like, what kind of dress she wants to be buried in and like what she wants to happen at her service.

And my mom would always get so upset at me like, Why do you talk about that stuff? You're so morbid. And I mean, I mean, my grandma just like, we just want to make sure everything's arranged, you know, like, so her funeral's the way she wants it.

And the really sad twist of events is like my grandma's still alive, and her daughter, my mom, is not with us anymore. And so it's just interesting to me how like, the two people in my family who are the ones who talk about death a lot are the ones who outlived my dear mommy who was like, not into the death talk.

But she's there now, and whatever does happen after death, she's gone on that journey before me and I fully expect her to be there to welcome me and give me orientation to life after death.

What's one thing about the future that scares you?

I can get very anxious and scared about like, resources - like natural resources running out, and like the combination of like climate change, societal collapse, needing to defend myself. So...

And I even think not even the far away future, but just like the near future of just like, you know, I lived through the Texas snowpocalypse. Which was very traumatic and scary to be without, like running food - running food! - without running water, without electricity off and on for days and it was so cold, even though it's Texas. I know. It sounds silly, but it was so, so cold.

And just feeling like Okay, do we risk our lives and drive on the icy road to get to Tyler's apartment where there's electricity? Or do we stay here? Because we do have food here. It was just very scary.

And so anything even close to that, on a wider scale is something that scares me about the future. So you know, it's summer here in Texas. Now, if the electricity were to go out, I would be really scared of just how hot we would - this is actually not that hot of a summer here in Texas. But in general, it would usually be unbearably hot, like 102°, 100°, 99° every day.

And so just I get, that's something about the future that scares me, is just like the failure of public leadership that keeps happening on the state level. You know, the last four or five years and especially during the pandemic.

The issues we have in Texas with electricity reliability, and then also the whole anti-mask anti-vaccine sentiments that are not - they're not a teeny tiny group of people in Texas. It's a noticeable, I think, minority, but it's still noticeable.

So those things combined, just like COVID getting out of hand again, combined with like weather disasters is something about the very near future or maybe even the now or the possible near future that scares me.

Do you regret anything?

I try not to regret things. I, clearly from Episode 13, which is all about buyer's remorse and how remorseful and regretful I was of mistakes I made when buying my house.

In general, I try not to hold on to regret. I feel like it's a really painful, spirit deteriorating feeling. But if I think about something I might regret... Yeah, I, well, something I would have, I would like - yeah, let's call it a regret.

Something I would have liked to have been different is, I had a scholarship from the Rotary Club and I could choose any country in the world to study in. And I originally was going to study creative writing in South Africa.

And I think part of the reason I, a big part of the reason I didn't want to go to South Africa is I really felt like - I was going to be in Johannesburg. And I've heard great things about

Johannesburg, but I was just kind of felt like, um, is apartheid still kind of there just in an informal way? I don't want that to be my first experience of Africa. I just, I don't want that.

But I would have been able to spend an entire year studying creative writing, living in South Africa. That just feels very artistic and delicious to me. Instead, I went to Ghana, and I was at the University of Ghana, I was doing African Studies coursework, which I enjoyed, but it wasn't creative writing, right?

And I do think about that like, how my artistic journey would have been different, how might I have - this is not a word, dove in deeper? Dived in deeper? Into being a more creative-forward person versus a more business- and entrepreneur-forward person if I had spent that year in Johannesburg, studying creative writing.

That just sounds - even now, it sounds like a dream. Right? So that is, that's a regret. That's a regret, that I didn't - either that I didn't do it or that I didn't, yeah I guess that I didn't do it. I did. Clearly I went to Ghana, I had a wonderful time, I met a man who I later married, but then later divorced.

And like, it's not that I'm like, Oh, I want to undo every single thing about having been married and then divorced, even though it was like, super painful. For me, it's more about the what could have been had I spent that year in Johannesburg and focused on creative writing.

What has been your greatest struggle?

Um, I think... I think my greatest struggle has been I think it's trusting myself. Or that's what it feels like it's been for the last few years.

I'm a person who has a lot of ideas and a lot of intuition, a lot of impulses. So I'm receiving a lot of information all the time from my body, from my spirit, from my spirit guides, from other people. I'm a little bit like a sponge emotionally, sometimes, and energetically or just like ideas.

And so sometimes it can be hard to like, clean up the clutter and know like, what of all that is me and what I really want versus like, what sounds good or looks good or will impress people. And so for me, my biggest struggle has been kind of finding the signal in

the noise and then following that signal instead of pretending it's just, Oh, it's just another bit of noise.

And so you know, I'd say it's, with that signal versus noise - it's, it can be hard... This sounds, what I'm about to say sounds like one of those fake answers in an interview when they're like, What's your biggest weakness? And you're like, I just care too much! So what I'm about to say sounds like that.

But my greatest struggle has been being good at lots of things, which then makes it hard sometimes to like, actually be clear and know what you really, really love to do. And committing to what you really love to do versus just something you're good at. Yeah.

What has been your greatest triumph?

Hmm. I... Oh, let's see. My greatest triumph thematically is probably being resilient in the face of great adversity. I mentioned this on episode one, but I grew up in a low income high crime neighborhood that had the highest teen pregnancy rate in the nation.

When I was growing up there, so many men in my family that have been in jail, or prison. I've had three people in my family murdered. We've got domestic violence going on in my family, and addiction, HIV AIDS, a lot.

And I love my family very much. And we got a lot going on. And I think that, you know, there's the family stuff. And then there's also, that's kind of my extended family stuff, and then there's also like, let's see, I have been through a lot of physical and sexual traumatic experiences.

And as those of you who listened to the podcast know, my mom died when she was 57, in front of me, and my sister and my dad, like I watched the life leave her body in the beco happen, just on like a television show, when the people were there trying to resuscitate her.

And then 90 days later, you know, moved to New York City with my then husband, who four days after we moved to New York City, asked for a divorce. There's like a whole story there. And then, a year later, my best friend Leah died a month into the pandemic, at the age of 35. And it's just a lot of loss. My high school sweetheart also killed himself.

So just I've been through a lot of loss, and a lot of heartache, and a lot of pain. And I would say my greatest triumph is that I get out of bed in the morning and like, keep going. A lot of people, especially after my mom died, were just like, how do you do it?

Like, I would stay in bed all day, and I would never do anything again. And I'm just like, I don't I don't know what to tell you. All I know how to do is keep living. And I would say my greatest triumph is that I keep going.

And I still believe that all in all, you know, life is good. Or at least my life is really good, and I have a lot to be grateful for. And that I- I don't want to say I have like a responsibility, but I have an interest in helping bring inspiration, encouragement and comfort to people who - and it doesn't have to be people who aren't like so down and out experiencing homelessness, it doesn't have to be that -it can just be experiencing inner anguish because you have a lot of the a lot of that anxiety of the overachiever. Right. So yeah, I'd say that's my greatest triumph.

Okay, how would you describe yourself to a stranger?

Well, actually, I have a term now that I feel really good about using to describe myself. My friend Jenny came up with it. And I was like, Oh, I love it! And the term is artsy-smartsy. So I, let's start with the smartsy part. Like, I'm very into school, I have a bunch of degrees. I have a whole business helping people get into grad school.

I love to read. I was like a bespeckled bookish little nerd growing up. And, so I'm smartsy, I'm a very smart book smart person. But I'm also artsy, you know, I have a podcast, I like to write, I like to paint. I want to get a guitar, I want to get a piano, I have a mandolin.

So like, I really, especially even more these days, I am feeling like, I want to really let that creative side of me out more. Make jewelry, make clothes, that kind of stuff. So that's how I describe myself to a stranger, I'd say I'm artsy smartsy.

So, like, I'm into school and books and being a nerd and reading the news, but I'm also into that more artistic, creative side of life. But I, maybe we need another word, but I really like to make money. So, not saying you cannot make money being artsy.

But I, that's a very important element of it for me, too, is like, earning well. It's fun for me and important to me, and that's a part of it too.

What are three words that define who you are?

Okay. Define, hmm. I would say... Three words that define who you are. You know what I would say - the phrase, I know, I'm kind of cheating, because I think they want like three adjectives. But I'm gonna do a phrase. And my phrase would be 'On my way.'

I heard this phrase in reference to myself, I guess it was two years ago? Oh, my goodness, not really! Was it two years ago? It was around, it was around September 2019... That is two years ago. Oh, my goodness. Okay. So two years ago, I was writing these really long, open-hearted shares on Facebook about my life post divorce, the men I was dating, the feelings I was having, the adventures I was going on.

And one of my friend's mom was following all my little readings. And my friend told me that her mom would say like, you know, oh, Kaneisha's, Kaneisha's finding her way. And I felt like a little offended because I'm like, what does that mean? Are you judging me?

But I actually think that that's a really lovely phrase. So I know, I said, I think I said 'On my way' at the beginning of the answer to this question, but we'll just say 'Finding my way.' Finding my way in life, finding my way in business, finding my way in creativity, finding my way in love. I'm finding my way.

All right. What's holding you back from your dreams?

Hmmm! Well, some dreams I have, first, that have not happened is: I would love to be a well known, widely read author. I would love to write short stories, personal essays, and self help that lots and lots of people read.

Of course I already have my self help book, *Be Your Own Boyfriend* that I self-published. But like, I would like to be known where you can buy my book in the airport, or, you know, in a gift shop like it's so and the distribution is so wide that like, people stumble upon my book.

They're not just buying it, because they're like, Oh, I know Kaneisha, I like Kaneisha, let me buy it. So that's one of my dreams that hasn't happened yet. And to be honest, that I have not seriously pursued.

Let's just talk about that dream. So what's holding me back from that dream? Probably fear, right? Fear that I'll get rejected 627 times. Except that would be amazing if I got

rejected 627 times, because that means that I would have tried to get a book deal 627 times instead of the like, two that I've tried.

So it's more like, yeah, fear of rejection, of like, oh if I really go for it and it doesn't work out, fear of losing control. So I know what it's like to self publish a book. I know the pros, the cons. One of the pros is like, you get to decide what your cover looks like. You decide every single word that goes in the book, you completely own the book.

Cons of traditional publishing is like, they, you know, they give you input on the cover, but they choose the cover. They have editorial oversight, they have a lot of copyright sort of rights or publishing rights over your book. And that's scary to me, like losing that control.

But I would say that, I hope that I at least do what it takes to give myself the option to get a traditional book deal, right? So not that I have to take it, but that I have the option to get a book deal.

I would say I would love a six figure book deal, or seven figure, that would be amazing, right? I have to be like, superduper famous, but let's call it a six figure book deal. I can like, I can actually believe that.

And I know that that would require having a huge following online. And then I have some, I have a complicated love-hate relationship with social media, but I do think that that would be required in order to get a six figure book deal.

So the things that have held me back from my dream of being a widely read author, widely read author of self-help, personal essays, and short stories... Well, a) you gotta write them. So that's part of that, I could say it's laziness, but I'm really not a lazy person. And I actually don't even believe laziness is a thing, and we can talk about that.

But it's fear, fear of rejection... I know I'm a great writer, I'm an excellent writer. So it's not that I fear people will be like, oh, her writing's no good. I don't think that the populace would think that, it's more like the gatekeepers.

I'm very intimidated and defensive about that whole, the traditional publishing industry set up right? Of needing an agent, and then the selling it to the house, and having that whole process. And I'm just like, let me just publish my own book.

So that would be what's holding me back is fear of loss of control and fear of being rejected by the gatekeepers. But I do think that if I could get over those fears, and then also whatever my fear is of the social media, maybe fear of enmeshment - that I'll get super duper enmeshed in social media and like, addicted and obsessed. To where I'm doing that too much and not being in my real life, and eroding my romantic relationship, eroding my real friendships because I'm like building up this online persona, this online life. That's a fear for me too.

So I guess like fear of losing myself or fear of and measurements of fear of losing myself, fear of loss control and fear of rejection by the gatekeepers.

All right! Well, I think this is long enough, I answer questions one through 10. If there's interest, I can make more videos answering questions 11 and onward. But I hope that my responses to these first 10 questions of the 37 Good Questions To Ask If You Want To Get Vulnerable With Someone You Love, has helped you get to know me just a little bit better.

If you want to share your response to any of these questions I will gratefully receive them at podcast@scaleyourjoy.com, I read every single one. I would love that. So I hope that you learned a little bit more about me, and got to see a little tiny bit more of my mind and my heart. All right. Until next week!