



The Limitless Women Podcast Tonya Dalton

In today's episode, I'm excited to interview Tonya Dalton. During our conversation we dive into Tonya's journey to philanthropy and how giving has shaped her as a leader in her personal and professional life. She'll share some of her tips to grow your business in a way that feels good and honors your commitments to your personal life, your family and those things that you love.

Want to skip head? Episode Highlights

- [03:04] Learn about Tonya's journey to philanthropy and how the gifts she gained in that process can help you to continually give YOUR gifts.
- [09:45] Discover how you can be a better leader in your own life by listening to the ways Tonya has grown personally through her path with philanthropy.
- [16:09] Listen to the advice that Tonya has for you if you are thinking "I want to do what Tonya does!"

Episode Transcript

[MC] Welcome to the Limitless Women Podcast. Our mission is to help women business owners, like you, grow profitable businesses and actualize your opportunities to serve and give to yourself and others. Here's your host, the founder of Limitless Women, Laura Gisborne.

[Laura Gisborne] In today's episode, I'm super excited to introduce you to a woman you're going to love! A true soul sister, Tonya Dalton. In addition to having her book be named one of the top Business books by Fortune magazine, Tonya's podcast [Productivity Paradox](#) is ranked among the top 50 in the Self Improvement category on iTunes. After listening to this episode today you'll see why she's been awarded the Elite Enterprising Women Award and has been named the Female Entrepreneur to Watch for the state of North Carolina.

During our conversation we dive into Tonya's journey to philanthropy, and how giving has shaped her as a leader in her personal and professional life. She shares some of her great techniques for really finding ways to simply get things done, in a way that allows you to grow your business in a way that feels great for you, while still honoring your commitments to your personal life, your family and those things that you love. I know you're going to love listening to her and learning from her wisdom, and at the end of the show we'll make sure you know how to stay in touch and connect with her outside of this podcast. Enjoy the show!



[Laura Gisborne] Tonya, thank you so much for making time for me today. I really appreciate you. I just remember seeing you across the room in Miami and thinking, "Who's that girl?" You just have so much charisma and so much vitality. I don't mean to be offensive because you're a grown woman, but you just have this beautiful energy and vitality and passion. When you open your mouth, all this wisdom comes out. So I'm thrilled to get a chance to get to know you better and talk a little bit about your passions, and then to let our audience know a little bit more about your work and how they can connect with you so that they can get to experience you just like I am now.

[Tonya Dalton] Oh, thank you so much. I have to say I felt exactly the same.

[Laura] Thank you.

[Tonya] I'm so glad when we connected.

[Laura] Yeah, it's really precious. You and I have discovered really quickly on in kind of the early stages of our friendship that we both share a passion for contribution and philanthropy and giving back. We also share history. We share so many things. We're kind of finding how much we both love systems and how much we love efficiency and all the secret sauce. At the same time, culturally, we have a lot of commonalities. Can you share with me a little bit about your journey and what brought you to where you are today? Because I know you're doing a tremendous amount of giving back and contribution through your business.

[Tonya] I feel like the idea of contributing and philanthropy is just something that's just wired into my DNA. I think it's something that started, I don't know, from birth, almost. It's just the way that my parents messaged different things to me about how important it was to make an impact and how important it was to make a difference in people's lives. My dad was and he still is a huge philanthropist. In fact, in some of the cities -- we moved 11 times before I turned 18. In some of those cities, my dad would be named Philanthropist of the Year. He would do all kinds of campaigns with his company and growing and getting all of his employees on board. I think for us, the conversations about giving back, the conversations about volunteering and the conversations about philanthropy were just part of our dinner conversations. It was just almost like a way of life, like of course you give back because that's just the way of the world. That's really what you're supposed to do, that you're continually giving your gifts to other people because it comes back to you in so many other ways.



For me, I really feel like that. Even in college and in high school, I was doing all kinds of little things here and there, making the small waves that I could then. And then when I started my business, I became really, really passionate about working with women. I think that came from the fact that I started my first business, I say my first business. It was my first real business that I was all in on, that I was going to really grow. I started that with no business experience. I started it with no business starting a business because I really had thought it would be this little kind of side gig that I was doing. My husband was traveling the world. He was doing marketing for Fortune 500 companies. Literally, he went on one trip where he touched six of the seven continents. So he'd be gone for like three, four weeks at a time. At the time, our kids were really small. I had a conversation with him while he was on the other side of the planet that changed my whole world where I was talking about all the things that the kids were doing and what was going on, and he got really, really quiet. And I said, "What's wrong?" And he said, "I'm missing everything."

[Laura] Wow.

[Tonya] "I'm missing all the moments. I'm missing all the milestones." And I'm like, "No, no, no, no, it's fine, it's fine." And he said, "No, I'm missing being the hands-on dad that I want to be." So I hung up the phone with him that day, and I stood in my kitchen, my bright yellow kitchen, and I made a decision that day that I was going to grow my business to the point where he could come work alongside of me.

[Laura] Nice.

[Tonya] At the time, he had his MBA, making NBA kind of income. And here I am with a business that I'm selling to friends, maybe friends or friends. I never even took a business course in college. And yet, within a year, I was able to make that happen.

[Laura] Nice.

[Tonya] So the business grew. He was able to come work alongside of me. We still work alongside of each other. He and I sit across the desk from each other every day, which I love. Really, what happened from that was that then I started showing other women how they could grow their businesses. I became really, really passionate about how do I help women achieve this lifestyle independence, this lifestyle freedom and financial freedom like we've had for me to be able to work alongside of my husband and to be able to live a life where he runs carpool, he makes the kids lunches, and he's really the active hands-on dad that he really dreamed of being. To me, it's like, gosh, I was able to create this life for myself. How do I make it so that other women can feel this way as well? That is really when I started to expand into this idea of how do I really help and impact women?



I ended up closing that first business, opening up my new business, inkWELL Press. I say new. At this point, it's four or five years old. But at the time it was new. It really was 100% and it still is focused on helping women feel more confident as they step into intentional leadership and using productivity to really feel like, "Okay, I can reclaim my time and I can really focus on family time and be 100% present with my family while still making money, making an impact, making a difference." That's really where I started. And then ever since I started, there's always been this part of the business, a part of the company that was how do we give back? Because it doesn't matter how much money you have. You always have enough to give back. Even when you think that you don't have enough, you've got something in there. Even if it's in kind, donations, even if it's your time, even if it's whatever it is that you can do, those little bits, those little ripples begin to make waves.

It just becomes this thing that's part of the DNA of your business and part of doing business. I truly believe that when you do that, it becomes a magnet, and you attract the type of people that you want to attract. You get the right kind of customers. You collaborate with these partnerships with these other people who are aligned just like you are. I think that comes from putting in good into the world, right?

[Laura] I think so. I think you can just put a fork in me. I think I'm done. I think you just pretty much summarized the whole vision and mission of what we do as Limitless Women.

[Laura Gisborne] Do you ever get lonely working from home? Are you hungry for connections with other women just like you? Each year we host several live events for our Limitless Women community, where we come together to connect, grow and learn. I'd love to see you at the next one. Check us out at LimitlessWomen.com for details.

[Laura] It's awesome and it's just great to meet a soul sister who shares that because I'm always fascinated where it comes from for people. When I first started doing this work and I was in a lot of prayer and meditation asking to be shown how would you have me work in the world. Like you, we've had other businesses, we've been successful and really had come to this place where it was what is the passion? What's the piece that you would have me bring to the world?



I thought everybody had the giving gene, and I came to find that that's not the case. There's fewer of us that have that than don't. I really have come to believe that it's a tentative leadership. So how has giving -- I mean it sounds like it's just ingrained in you. I could just imagine how brilliant and amazing you were just 20 years ago starting this. What do you feel like it's done for you personally as a leader in your own life, the experience of giving?

[Tonya] What has it not given me? Honestly, I like to tell people that for me to feel really good. I'm all about women finding satisfaction in their day. I talk to women all the time about do you run around busy? Do you check 1000 things off your list? Do you feel like you're chasing your tail, but you slip into bed at night and you think, "Why didn't I get more done? Why didn't I do this? I didn't do enough." We feel unsatisfied. I'm all about creating that sense of satisfaction for women, that you go to bed at night and you go, "Today was a good day." You know what makes today a good day? You know what makes today a great day? Giving to other people. It really makes the biggest difference. When you are giving to other people, I feel like you get so much more. It's not even things that are measurable. It's funny because I was just having this conversation with my kids over the weekend because we've gone through and we were cleaning out. We have these two storage rooms in our basement. We had all this stuff that's been sitting in there and I pulled it all out. The kids were like, "Oh, we should have a garage sale."

I had this conversation with them where I was like, "Listen, if we have stuff that's good enough that somebody wants to buy it, we should give it." People deserve that. We should give it. If we are blessed enough, why do we need more? We have good stuff. Let's put it out. So I went on Craigslist. I did a listing on Wednesday saying, "Garage sale, everything is free." I took pictures.

[Laura] Nice. I love it.

[Tonya] There was like American Girl dolls.

[Laura] Oh, good stuff.

[Tonya] There was like décor. It was good stuff. I wanted people to feel like they could come and get amazing things. So I put it on the side yard. I was like I don't know how this is going to go. I had said Saturday morning at 8:30. I will list the address so you can come.

[Laura] First come, first served.



[Tonya] First come, first served. Take what you want. Be kind. Kind of pay it forward type of messaging. So we went out there and we just sat. It was the most incredible experience because people were so grateful. They were just, "Thank you so much. It's so nice to be able to come and get good things." I had a woman who had just moved here with her mom and her daughter who was ecstatic. She scored the American Girl dolls. She was like, "We have no furniture in our house." They just loaded up. I said to my kids, "This is why you give." This is why you give because those people are walking away feeling good, feeling excited about the things that we no longer even wanted. But even more so, those people are now going to go forward and how do they feel? They're going to be putting more good into the world. It's this whole ripple effect.

I think this is the thing when it comes to giving. It's more than just you. It's so much bigger than you because it does. It's this whole domino effect of one thing knocking over the next, getting bigger and bigger. That's truly how we begin to make an impact. That's how we really make a difference in the world. For me to say, what have I gotten back? It's measurable. It really is. For me, it's just part of how we do business, that we always make sure that we have enough product that we can donate, that we order enough extra, we donate to battered women's shelters, we donate to treatment rehabilitation facilities, we donate training. These places use what we give them and the training that we offer to help women get back on their feet.

[Laura] It's so awesome.

[Tonya] They have time and they get back on their feet. To me, that is all that I need. I don't need a thank-you note. Just knowing that we have helped somebody who's gone through the lowest low of their lives, being in a shelter or being in a facility where they're getting off of drugs or alcohol and knowing that somebody cares enough about them to give them something new, something that is high quality, and something that is designed to help them put their best foot forward. It really is. It's immeasurable.

[Laura] Well, and I love what you're talking about the training piece too, because that's literally my most favorite thing in the whole world outside of spending time with my children who are now adults. Every minute I get to be with them is so precious for me. When I'm looking at how I spend my time as an entrepreneur, how I spend my time as a leader, there's such a joy in bringing training to nonprofits and to be able to help them scale and grow. I think you'll agree with me on this. The systems that we find in private sector businesses are very similar and overlap in so many ways with nonprofit organizations.



So being able to take your talent, and you've got obviously your gifts and your talents as well, but being able to take your talent to be able to really lift them up and give them high-quality education and training so that they can grow and scale and serve more people is also another really great talent of yours. So I'm excited to hear that. Really cool.

[Tonya] Thank you. Thank you. It really does mean a lot to us to help people get on their feet. One of the other areas that we were really big on donating is to teachers. I used to be a teacher. I started off life. I say in my past life I was a teacher before I had kids. That was what I did. I remember as a teacher just being so grateful for anything anyone suggests. My first classroom, I think I spent my entire first month's paycheck on staplers and folders and painted the lockers in my room and things like that. So to be able to do something to help teachers who obviously put forth a lot of good into the world, that's just like a little way to lift those people up a little bit more. So the people who are in service of others, helping them as well, I think that's important.

[Laura] So great. So, so great. Yeah. Tell me a little bit about what's kind of your latest and greatest. I know you have a new book out. Let's talk a little bit about your work and what's turning you on in the workforce these days. Obviously, we have again just such a passion for your vision and mission for uplifting women. So thank you again for sharing your time today. It means so much.

Tell us about what you're feeling for women entrepreneurs right now. This is a special time. We're recording this during COVID's latest spikes. People are scared and they're feeling uncertain. What kind of great advice do you have for a woman who is listening to this saying, "Hey, I want to do that. I want to be like Tonya"?

[Tonya] Yeah. Well, I would tell you that I started my first business in 2008, so right smack at the beginning of a recession. I feel like people get scared off by things like this. There's so much uncertainty. Here's the truth. Life is always uncertain. Life is always uncertain. We can say this is a time of uncertainty, but it's not really true. We're always in uncertain times. It's really taking ownership of your choices and how you want to spend that time. I would tell people that really right now, this is the time to invest. This is the time to invest in you and in your education and making those steps. To me, that's the greatest thing you can do right now is really take the time to get training, to get coaching, to really think forward towards the vision of where you want to go with your business or with your life.



I came out with my book, *The Joy of Missing Out*. It's been amazing because it's so great to have that way to get a hold of so many women and to get them to really understand that yes, we're missing out on things, but there's so much joy in missing out, in choosing to miss out. That a lot of the things that we used to spend our time doing, running and chasing and doing all those things are gone right now. It's funny that the book came out pre-COVID.

[Laura] Such good timing.

[Tonya] I feel like it was timed specifically. I just feel like sometimes God has got some good timing. He has all that in mind.

[Laura] We call that divine timing, yes, yes.

[Tonya] Totally divine timing. So really, the book is about how do you align your life? The first part of the book is about discovery. What is your vision? What is your mission? What are your core values, what I call your North Star? Let's create a life around that. *The Joy of Missing Out* is all about how do we create systems for you? How do we create a life that feels productive?

By productive, I mean not doing more but doing what's most important. So how do we create a life that feels important, that feels nourishing to your soul, that feels satisfying at the end of your day? How do we do that while keeping your priorities front and center? It's all about creating a system that wraps around you and your priorities. I think so often, we feel like we have to like cram things in and fix it. You know what I mean? There's this system and I have to work my life around it. That's why it doesn't work. But if you take the time, and like I said, right now is a great time to discover what it is that's truly important to you because you have so much clarity. In the book I actually say it's hard to know what to throw overboard until your ship is sinking. Right now our ships are sinking, right? Right now you're like, "This isn't important, this isn't important, this isn't important."

[Laura] It's such a good opportunity.

[Tonya] It really is. You get a lot of clarity. That's what we walk through in the book is discovery. Then we go to clarity. How do you really work your day so that you are focusing on what's most important? Simplicity. How do we create systems so that things run on autopilot? Because we still got to do laundry, we still got to plan meals, we still got to pay the bill.



And then the last step is really harmony. How do we create a life that feels harmonious? How do we get rid of the idea of balance? Because I don't think balance really exists. And how do we really create a life that ebbs and flows with the harmony and then create that life for ourselves? It really is the four-step process of how do you create a life that feels intentional? That's what I like to tell people. I talk about productivity. They come in the door, and I'm like, "It's really about being intentional." And people are like, "Oh!"

[Laura]

Yeah. And I think having women have the perspective, first of all, I think, that there is kind of a core premise that they have to really adopt for themselves that this is possible. I think that's really an important part of our work when we lend our voices to be in service to others, to say, "Listen, girlfriend. If I've done it, you can do it too." It's not necessarily the way we were educated in school. It's not necessarily what we've heard or read. Again, if you find one person doing it, it's possible. If you find multiple people doing it, it's really possible and now you get to choose.

I say to people all the time-- I'm about to turn 54 this summer -- my life is a typical overnight sensation. It's the result of many years of getting intentional and choosing and learning to let go. There were so many things to learn to let go of that just didn't support me. I feel like, again, you and I are so aligned in this. I always encourage women to build a business around their lives, not to build their life around their business, and encourage them to know that that's really especially for the mamas of the world. You know what I mean? I have a lot of friends who are not mamas. But I got to tell you that for me to have the luxury of dropping my kids off at school and picking them up and coaching soccer and coaching cheerleading and being on the school board and all the things that I got to do while they were becoming the adults they are today was really a conscious choice. I got highly efficient and productive during my working hours because my priority was I wanted every minute I could have with those babies.

So whatever your motivator is, it's not for me to say what it is for other people, but whatever that passion is, whatever that joy is that is making your heart sing, get that on the calendar first and then figure out how to build the business around it. I love *The Joy of Missing Out* as a structure of like a really simple system. It's not about building a million-dollar business. To me that's not the end goal. The end goal is really financial freedom, some time freedom, and the emotional freedom that comes from being able to give. Here's the thing. We talk a lot about giving in our world. We believe giving causes growing. We get to give. It's not something we're going to do someday. It's this whole process. I love hearing your journey with giving. It's like, well, of course. It was always there. Of course. Yeah, that's beautiful. It's so great.



[Tonya]

Yeah, I think you're so right. It really is. I like to call *The Joy of Missing Out* small huge movements. They're simple to implement, easy to manage, but they're monumental in the impact they can make in your life and in your every day. I think that's the thing. You're a great testament to this as well. I leave work every day at 3:00 because my kids, I still have kids at home. I leave work, I take off my CEO hat, I go home, I put my CEO of the home on so I'm going to be in mom mode. I'm running a multi seven-figure business. I'm giving back. You're able to do those things when you really create systems that work for you. It truly is about starting with what is important to you and putting your life at the center and wrapping everything else around it.

It doesn't have to be hard to do. It really doesn't. You don't have to feel guilty. This is the thing is walking away from that guilt that we can feel that "Oh, is it okay to do this? Is this all right?"

Here's the thing, sisters. If you are holding back your gifts, if you are not sharing your unique, special message with everybody else in the world, you're being selfish. You're holding that back from helping other people. When you reframe it and you realize, "Wow, people need what I'm giving them," then I'm giving willingly. What I want to give, let's give more of that. Really reframing that in your head really can make a huge difference, I think.

[Laura]

Beautiful. All right, anything that you want to wrap up with, my dear, as far as how we can find you online? Obviously get the book *The Joy of Missing Out* for sure. Tell us where we can connect with you easiest and best.

[Tonya]

Yeah. So you can find me. The best place is TonyaDalton.com. You can find links to my podcast there, which is something that I do every week. I'm really, really passionate and excited about doing it. It's just almost like an extension of my teaching. I feel like I continue to teach. There's links to my podcast. There's links to my products because I also sell planners, productivity tools, all kinds of things to really help you implement the systems.

There's links to my book, which you can find on Amazon, at Target, Barnes & Noble. *The Joy of Missing Out* is the name of the book. To me, one of the greatest things is when you write a book, it's more than words on a page. It's pieces of you and your soul that you are sharing with others. Getting to have these conversations with these women who are reading the book and resonating with it and starting to implement it and seeing a difference in their lives that has been incredible and huge. Yeah, I would love for people to pick up a copy of *The Joy of Missing Out*.



[Laura] Yeah. Well, thank you for your generosity in sharing pieces of your soul so that we can really uplift other women. This truly is your legacy work. You're leaving a beautiful legacy. I'm so proud to be your friend and so grateful that we're spending time together.

[Tonya] Thank you. I am so grateful for you.

[Laura] Okay, my love. Well, I think that's a wrap.

[Laura Gisborne] Thanks for tuning into the Limitless Women Podcast. We love to hear stories of Limitless Women out in the world, building community and giving back. Send in a personal story of your own, or nominate a Limitless Woman in your community so we can share her story. We'd love to feature you both.

[MC] You've been listening to The Limitless Women Podcast, with your host Laura Gisborne. Our mission is to help women business owners like you, grow profitable businesses and actualize your opportunities to serve and give to yourself and others. Are you a Limitless Woman? This is your personal invitation to learn how you can join our online community, grow through our business school and play with us at our live events. Go to LimitlessWomen.com for all the details. That's LimitlessWomen.com. Thanks for joining us!