



The Awakened Woman with Tererai Trent

Episode #22

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Lisa Larter (00:01):

Welcome to, She Talks Business. If you're an entrepreneur, business owner or aspiring mogul, chances are you want to learn more about marketing and mastering and monetizing your business. She Talks Business is where you'll learn all of that and more. My name is Lisa Larter and I'm an entrepreneur, high school dropout, wiener dog enthusiast and your host. Let's get started.

Lisa Larter (00:24):

Welcome to She Talks Business. As we get close to wrapping up the summer of reading, I want to introduce you to a woman by the name of Dr. Tererai Trent. Dr. Tererai Trent is one of today's most internationally recognized voices for quality education and women's empowerment. She was named as Oprah Winfrey's all-time favorite guest. She's a scholar, humanitarian, motivational speaker, educator, author, and founder of Tererai Trent International. She has been named one of the most inspiring women in the world, and she wrote the book *The Awakened Woman*. However, Tererai was born in Zimbabwe, and at the age of 18, she had three children. As you'll hear in this interview, it is common practice or it was common practice, it still is today unfortunately in many families, to trade their daughters for a cow into marriage when their daughters are still children themselves.

Lisa Larter (01:44):

Tererai's book, *The Awakened Woman*, is one of the most powerful and inspiring books that I have ever read. It was gifted to me by a client of mine by the name of Diane Merpaw many years ago. I took that book, and after I read it, I knew I needed to gift it to a whole bunch of my clients. And so, Tererai's book became the basis of one of our Beach House Mastermind Retreats, where Tererai actually Skyped in to say hello to everyone. Tererai is



proof that it doesn't matter where your life begins. If you have the courage and the audacity to dream big, and you have the patience and the conviction to stay with your dream, anything that you desire in life is possible.

Lisa Larter (02:50):

Now Tererai buried five dreams. She planted her dreams to strengthen her dreams. Her first four were all tied to education, and her fifth dream was tied to making an impact in the community that she came from. You're going to hear the story today about what those dreams were, how long it took to accomplish them. But she's working on her fifth dream right now, which is empowering students to get educated, especially young women because she believes that education is the pathway out of poverty. She has 11 students right now that are trying to go to university, and she's raising money to send those students to university. But before you think I am just going to ask you to make a donation, yes, I would like you to make a donation, I want you to listen to the conversation. I want you to be moved to make a donation. I want you to feel like you are part of this movement. I want you to feel the possibility for your own life and your own dreams as a result of what Tererai has done.

Lisa Larter (04:04):

Ladies and gentlemen, this is an incredible interview, and I am blessed to know Tererai. I am blessed that I can send her a message and she will respond. That's just who she is. Even in spite of all the things that she's accomplished, she remains a humble, down-to-earth, generous, kind human being. And it is really an honor for me to wrap up a summer of reading by sharing her, her book, *The Awakened Woman*, and her vision of the future through education with you today. Let's get started.

Lisa Larter (04:41):

All right, well, welcome to this special episode of She Talks Business with Tererai Trent. I am over the moon to be able to have a conversation with this incredible woman. A little bit of backstory, a few years ago, a client of mine, Diane Merpaw, sent me a copy of Tererai's book, *The Awakened Woman*. I looked at the book and at first I was like, "I don't know. Usually, I read business books and marketing books." And so I picked up this book and I started to read it, and I could not put it down. It changed my life. So to be

able to have a conversation live in person with you Tererai is a complete blessing. Thank you for saying yes to this.

Tererai Trent (05:32):

Thank you for having me. Thank you, I really appreciate to be in your presence.

Lisa Larter (05:36):

The feeling is mutual. I'd like to start by having you share a little bit about your story because your story is, it is so remarkable on so many levels, and there's so many things that I want to ask you about. But I first want people who have not read your book and don't understand your mission and your goals and your organization and what you want to do to make an impact in this world, I want them to understand where you came from and how you became who you are today.

Tererai Trent (06:16):

Well, I was born in a small village in a country that was known as Rhodesia, and today it's known as Zimbabwe. So I grew up in a colonial country. I come from this long line of women who were storytellers, women who believed in other women. But they were also oppressed as women. I remember we would sit around the open fire in our village with no running water, no electricity and hear these stories from my grandmother, talking about the stories from her mother, which is my great-grandmother, and realize that my great-grandmother and my grandmother and my mother were married when they were very young, before they could define their own dreams in life. They were all exchanged for a cow as part of their marriage. They never had an education. And here I am listening to these stories. Little did I knew that I would fall in the same pathway.

Tererai Trent (07:35):

I was married when I was young, and by the time I was 18 years of age, I was a mother to four babies. One of the babies died as an infant because I failed to produce enough milk to feed the child. I was a child myself. And there I was with no education and in a very abusive marriage. But all I wanted was an education. And later on, as we gained our independence, our rural community became a study area for those who were coming from universities. They were coming in to understand the issues around sources of

livelihoods and to understand women, to understand rural business and how can women uplift themselves, and not only from local universities but also from around the world. I began to see Americans, Australians, British. They were all these women coming, and there was something about these women that really inspired me.

Tererai Trent (08:57):

They walked in a way that showed some awakening, freedom, and there was something about it that I loved. There was this particular woman, she was from America. She asked me one question that no one had asked me before, "What are your dreams?" And I'm sitting in a circle with these other women, and I am thinking, "Is she crazy asking me, 'What are your dreams?'" Me, black woman, oppressed, marginalized, abused? Am I supposed even to dream?" I looked at the other women, and I was just silent. The other women were like, "Well, we want to educate our children. We want food security at household level." And I was quiet. She looked at me, she said, "Young woman, you've been quiet. Please tell me, what are your dreams?" When I opened my mouth, I remember that day, I became a chatterbox. I shared some things that I had never shared with anyone else. I think there was something about this woman that nudged my heart, and I said, "I want to go to America. I want to have an undergraduate degree. I want to have a Masters, and I want to get PhD."

Tererai Trent (10:25):

The women that I was sitting with were quiet, and I could feel that silence, asking themselves, "How can she talk about that? She's expecting a fourth child. She has an abusive husband. She has no high school education. And let alone, talk about going to America, has she gone crazy?" In that moment of silence, I began to doubt myself. And this stranger, this woman, she looked at me and she said, "If you believe in your dreams and you work hard, your dreams are achievable." Which means in my language tinogana. I couldn't believe it. And I-

Lisa Larter (11:18):

Did you believe her?

Tererai Trent (11:23):

I believed her the way she said it. But when it wanted to settle with me, those words, when they wanted to settle with me, oh something was saying, "Oh my gosh, this is crazy." She looked back at me because she could see the doubt in me, and she said, "I have seen women like you, women who live in poverty, they worked hard and through my organization, and today, these women not only have they educated their kids, they've educated themselves." I believed it. I ran to my mother, and my mother said, "If you believe in what this woman is saying to you, write down those dreams and bury them the same way we bury the umbilical cord or the birth cord."

Tererai Trent (12:22):

I come from this culture where when a child is born, the elders of the village, the female elders, the ones that I call the wisdom whisperers, the librarians of our memories, they would always surround this infant and snip out the umbilical cord and take the mother's old dress and find a small piece and tie the umbilical cord and bury the umbilical cord with the belief that when this child grows... They were setting up an intention, a manifestation. When this child grows, whatever happens to this child, wherever they go, this umbilical cord will always remind them of their birthplace, will always remind them of their dreams. So my mother said, "You bury your dreams wherever you go, despite the abuse in your life, despite the challenges in your life. These intentions, these dreams that you are burying, they'll always remind you of your birthplace. They will always remind you of the importance of these dreams."

Tererai Trent (13:38):

And so I was ready to bury my dreams. And when my mother said, "Tererai, read back your dreams." and when I did, she said, "I only see your personal dreams, your personal goals. That's all I see, Tererai. But I want you to remember this: your dreams in this life will always be meaningful when they are tied to the greater good." I had no idea what my mother was talking about. My mother was a very quiet woman, and she saw doubt and she said, "Your dreams in this life will have greater meaning when they are tied to the greater good. That's what makes life. That's our humanity. That's our Ubuntu. I am because we are. Since we are, therefore I am. It's not only about you, Tererai."

Tererai Trent (14:48):

So I added my fifth dream, my number five from the four dreams that I had. When I'm done, I want to come back and improve the lives of women and girls in my community so they don't have to go through what I had gone through, getting married young, having babies young, suffering, living in poverty. I knew education was the gateway out of poverty. Education was the gateway out of my own oppression, my marginalization. My own awakening was to be achieved by gaining education.

Tererai Trent (15:34):

So it took me eight years after I wrote those dreams and buried them, eight years to achieve my high school education. I didn't have a high school. Eight years of failing, but eight years of succeeding, and eight years of never giving up. My mother was a very poor woman. We relied on subsistent farming. She had this small patch of land. And so, I had to do correspondence because I could not fit into a classroom. I was already an older girl with babies, and schools were not allowing anyone with babies into their classrooms. So I did correspondence, and we were still under the British system of education where I would study my materials and write and send these paperwork assignments to this place called Cambridge in Britain. And I had no idea where is Cambridge.

Tererai Trent (16:41):

I needed five subjects for me to achieve a high school diploma. I needed Math, English, Science, Geography, History. I couldn't find enough money, so my mother said to me, "Tererai, we can sell vegetables that we have." And remember, each subject required almost about 20 US dollars. And to sell vegetables to get to \$20, that meant a lot of vegetables. That meant a lot of digging and planting and harvesting and finding the market for someone to buy those vegetables. And she would say, "We can also sell mangoes and guavas." We had mangoes and guavas. And so, I would only take two subjects at a time because of the limitations of my financial situation. I would wait about three to six months to get those results from Cambridge. They would always come in a brown envelope, and I would go to the rural store to get that brown envelope. Somebody would say, "Hey, Tererai, we saw your letter." And I would rush and get that letter.

Tererai Trent (18:10):

I would open that brown envelope, and I would realize I have a U, ungraded, F, failure. Go back to my mother, "I have failed." My mother said, "No, there are no failures here. We will sell more vegetables." And we would do, and I would go back and wait for that brown envelope. It would come. I have a U again, I have an F, and I would go back. Eight years, I opened that brown envelope and I had As and Bs, and I knew I had achieved my high school diploma. Why do I tell this story? I want to encourage women that no matter the challenges that are in front of you, never give up. Surround yourself with people who can encourage you, mentors who can... I use the word ululate through your failures and to your success and encourage and inspire you never to give up. Because when you are alone and when you are faced with failures, all you see is a failure. But when you are surrounded with mentors, with [foreign language 00:19:19], with people who believe in you, you don't see that failure. You see that as a lesson, as an experience to never give up and to go on.

Tererai Trent (19:30):

So after I had achieved my high school education diploma, my grandmother and my mother would say, "Tererai, during this process of failing and passing and gaining your As, you go to this place where you had buried your dreams and visualize those dreams as though you have already achieved those dreams. Because remember, you set an intention, and the universe will honor your dreams." I would walk to this place where I had buried my dreams, my five dreams, and I would visualize myself getting into an aeroplane coming to America. And I had never seen an aeroplane in my life. The only aeroplane that I knew were the war helicopters. Remember, I grew up during the war. So they would have these helicopters from the Rhodesian Army coming to the community looking for what they were calling the terrorists, which were the freedom fighters. So we grew up with those helicopters.

Tererai Trent (20:47):

I would imagine myself that helicopter is an aeroplane, getting myself into that aeroplane, finding a seat in that aeroplane, flying to this place called America and seeing these tall buildings and carry my books on an campus and visualize myself achieving my undergraduate, achieving my Masters, visualize myself achieving that PhD. I remember the day that I received that letter because I had applied for my undergraduate program at Oklahoma

State University after I had gotten an advice from others that if I go to the American Embassy they might tell me the best universities to go to. I went to the American Embassy, and they said, "No, no, no, no, we don't deal with that. You go to the American library in the city."

Tererai Trent (21:47):

I went to the American library and there was this lady, and I told you where I'm coming from and my dreams. And she said, "I know exactly where you can go. You can go either to Kentucky or to Oklahoma, Stillwater because you're looking for a small city. And with your kids, I think that would be the best place for you." I applied both Kentucky and Oklahoma State University, and Oklahoma State University came through.

Lisa Larter (22:19):

Amazing.

Tererai Trent (22:21):

When I got that letter... And then I realized that I didn't have enough money to fly to Oklahoma. In the meantime, I had been doing what they call working with women, savings plans. Because the country had gained independence, so they were looking for women NGOs, were looking for women who could come together and save their pennies, their money so they can get fertilizers and farming equipments. And so I would work with these women, and I would save every penny.

Tererai Trent (23:03):

My husband was very abusive, and I would hide my money. And so when I got this undergraduate program, I counted my pennies, and I realized there was nowhere out I was going to pay my tuition. I had enough money for my airfare and my kid's airfare. But there was also a shortage of about \$640 to get the right airfare to come to the US. My community rallied, everyone. People were selling chickens, mangoes, vegetables. One morning, the headman of our village comes to my mother and said, "I think we got the money." I remember counting pennies and dollars. Some of the dollars were like they had been washed in some clothes. They were so wrinkled. Poor women rising every day to sell something for Tererai to go to university.

Tererai Trent (24:29):

I remember going to the airport. And no matter how many times I tell the story, it gets me. It really does. I went to the airport, our small airport, and got into that aeroplane. There was this feeling that I've been here before. Because I had dreamed about it. I had visualized it. I arrived in United States of America and went to Oklahoma State University where I graduated with my undergraduate in agriculture. And later on, I did my Masters. I used to work three, four jobs to pay for my tuitions and to provide food for the kids. And at the same time, my mother would send me messages. "The wind just took off the classroom. One of the classrooms that you attended at the school is gone. We had too much rain, the windows are broken." And I would send \$20 here, \$50 here to repair the school because I knew I needed to go back and give back to my community. They had done so much for me.

Tererai Trent (26:09):

So when I finished my Masters, I looked for a job. I applied to this place called Little Rock, at an organization called Heifer International. I remember getting that job and I was walking into the passageway, and I met this woman. She looked at me and she said, "I think I know you." And I said, "I'm not sure. Maybe you're mistaken." "I'm originally from Zimbabwe." And I knew in that moment that this was the very woman whom I had met some 14 years ago, the woman who had inspired me, encouraged me, who had told me that, "Your dreams are achievable." There she is, and her name is Jo Luck, and she is the president and CEO of Heifer International. What are the odds? And I tell you this, when we honor our dreams, the universe, God will honor us. I believe that. There is no way else I could have met this woman.

Tererai Trent (27:48):

And so I worked for Heifer International, and she kept on saying, "I know your dreams, you want to have a PhD." I went on to do my PhD. I remember when I graduated at Western Michigan University with my PhD in Evaluations, which is a lot of statistics and measurements, and I realized as I was walking that stage to receive that paper that says now you're a PhD holder, it had taken me 20 years from the day that I had buried my dreams to achieve my PhD. I remember saying to myself, "Here is my closing argument to the world that seems to say, "Women should not be educated," to the world that seems to say, "Women's place is in the kitchen." And I am saying,

"No. If we give education to women, and if we believe in their dreams, women can achieve anything they want in this life."

Tererai Trent (29:18):

And now I have my PhD, and I'm thinking, "Dear mother, why did you make me write that number five dream of giving back. Where am I going to get the money to give back to my community?" I remembered Jo Luck, the president of Heifer International. She had used the word tinogana, it is achievable. Your dreams are achievable. And I started putting together these t-shirts with the word "Tinogana, it is achievable". And I said, "I'm going to sell many of these t-shirts, and I'm going to get the money and go home and rebuild the school and make sure that young kids, the girls and the boys, the women, they have a chance to gain an education and gain and achieve their dreams."

Tererai Trent (30:21):

Well, I only sold 20 t-shirts and mostly to my friends. I didn't have a marketing degree. And I was devastated. I wanted to go home and make a difference. And then one day I got a call, the most memorable phone call of my life, a call from Oprah Winfrey. She donated \$1.5 million towards that number five dream of giving back. My grandmother, my mother, they were very smart women. They knew it's not only about our personal goals. Neither is it about our financial goals, but it is about how our personal goals and how our financial goals and how our education and our diplomas are connected to the greater good. That's what gives meaning in life, and that's what's going to make us successful in this life. So today-

Lisa Larter (31:34):

Yeah, that's why your story is so inspiring because where you came from and what you have accomplished and how it is tied to making a difference for others, it's so powerful. I look at you and I think, "How did you have the audacity to dream that big? And then how did you have the conviction to stay the course amongst all of the failures, the challenges, the obstacles to do what you've done?" It's incredibly, incredibly inspiring for other people to see.

Tererai Trent (32:23):

Conviction and audacity comes from looking at what breaks our hearts. For me, what breaks my heart, the fact that I was hardly 14 years of age when I had my first baby, without an education. I was 18 when I had four children

and experienced death. I could see women who could not read and write. That broke my heart. That gave me the audacity to dream big. Because it is in those moments of our brokenness that we begin to hear the stirring in our hearts that says we can be part of this solution. Because I am not a victim. Many people, they hear my story, many they Google about me. They say, "Poor Tererai." and I say, "No, no, I am not a victim, I am part of the solution." And I [inaudible 00:33:40].

Lisa Larter (33:40):

Absolutely. You are a dreamer. Victim is like... I wouldn't even bring that word close to you. I would say that. There's an expression that everything in life happens for you, not to you. And when I look at your life and I look at the things that happened in your life, they are all connected to how they happened for you. Because your own life experience created the break-your-heart-for-others and wanting to make the impact that you've made. So today, I want to know, what dream do you have buried today? You're Oprah's all-time favorite guest, and I know that one of your dreams was for Oprah to write the forward to your book, to which she said no to originally. And then she did, and she gave you money for your school.

Lisa Larter (34:42):

So in essence, you crossed off that fifth dream. Taking that school, that could have been enough, Tererai. That could have been enough for you to say, "I've done it." But you're not done. So what are the dreams that you have buried today? What is the next wave? Because now you are not only an awakened woman, you are an empowered woman, and you are on a mission. You are not this young woman who had a dream with no idea about how to make it happen. You are now an older, wiser woman with a larger network of women who support you and look up to you, and you know what you're capable of now on a much different level. So what's next?

Tererai Trent (35:32):

Since we established my foundation, we have educated 38,000. It's almost now 40,000 kids who have gone through our education system. The aim has always been to make sure that those kids, and especially girls, they can go on to university and to college and achieve their education. I come from a culture, unfortunately, a society that still marries off young girls. But when they are educated, when there is an opportunity for these girls, the parents,

they tend to love that opportunity. Marriage is not giving your child to marry or marrying off your child is not a culture, it's poverty because there's an exchange of money and cows. But if they visualize this child going to school and getting an education, going to university, they see potential in this young woman to take care of their self and even be able to take care of the mother and the family.

Tererai Trent (37:03):

We are now on our third cohort of students that we have been sending to university, and we have about 28 students that are currently going or attending universities and colleges. 70% are girls in total. We have engineers. We have those who are doing motor mechanics. We have those who are into movies. They are doing anything that they want. The playing field is theirs, and it has given my community and surrounding community the respect to educate women and girls. Because now these girls, they come back to the community and talking about these stories from university and walking with a different walk, the one that I saw in the American women. And so to educate these numbers of women, of these girls and boys, it takes a lot. This time around, we have 11 students who are heading to university, and each student requires almost 9,000 for their three-year program.

Tererai Trent (38:36):

You ask me, "What are your dreams?" I say I'm tired of burying my dreams under the ground. I'm tired of putting dreams and cover them with dirt. I want to bury my dreams in the world's hearts, in the women's hearts, in the men that are out there, my brothers and sisters. If I can bury my dreams in their hearts so they can help us make these rural girls get their education, so these girls can break the cycle of early marriage, the baton of poverty. Their grandmothers, like my grandmother, they're mothers like my mother, they were born carrying this baton of poverty, the baton of illiteracy, lack of education, early marriage. I am asking my sisters around the world to say, "Can you help us re-shift and change, transform this baton so that these girls can carry the baton of education, the baton of dignity?"

Lisa Larter (40:03):

I love that. I love it so much. I am someone who does a lot of marketing, and I'm immediately thinking, "Why not have a community of people that donate on an annual basis because they're committed to the cause, they're

committed to the dream, and they want to see this happen not as a one-time thing, but as an ongoing way to give back and make a difference?" I mean, our stories are very different, and yet at the same time, they're very similar. When I look back at my life, I was raised in poverty, and I was raised by a single mom. My mom, she worked in a lumberyard, like a factory. She always worked really, really, really hard jobs. She was always treated poorly by the people that employed her.

Lisa Larter (41:06):

I have Crohn's disease. I was a sick child. There was a time when I needed to be hospitalized because I was hemorrhaging really, really badly from my bowel. I spent a week in ICU. When the doctor's office called my mom at work that day and said, "She needs to go to the city to the hospital. Do you want us to send her by ambulance or do you want us to wait until you come home from work?", her boss would not let her leave work that day to take me to the hospital. Tererai, when I got to the hospital that day, the only place they could find a pulse in my body was in my ankle. And so what breaks my heart is when single moms, women who are raising children by themselves, that don't have the support and the resources that they need. And I think that if we peel that back, what group of single moms ends up in situations like that? It's single moms who are not educated. When women are more educated, they can do better in their lives. They can make better choices. They have access to better employment opportunities. In so many ways, they're empowered to live life in a better manner because they can make better choices. But when you're not, then the cycle continues.

Tererai Trent (42:41):

It does. It does. And that's the reason why we need to walk the talk. Sometimes we can just talk about it. One of the reasons why I admire you, Lisa, when I came with my challenge, and you said, "I am here. We'll donate to your cause." But I'm also saying to women, "There are so many causes, and we need to be part of those causes to be, to advance them." The women and girls, they have been oppressed and marginalized. They need us right now. Sometimes you say, "There are so many causes, I don't know which one." Wherever the one that breaks your heart, please go and make a difference. There's no donation that is small. We can create these federal grants that I call the federal grant for other women to rise, for girls to rise. We have the power to do that.

Lisa Larter (44:01):

I regularly make donations through Kiva, and I'm always looking for the women. I'm always looking for the women who are trying to raise money to buy a goat or to sell their vegetables or to start a business. I'm always looking for those women, and I am always amazed at the percentage of women that pay back the loans that you give them. Because I give that money. If it gets repaid, it gets rolled back into another donation. But I'm always amazed at the dignity that also comes with receiving the loan and then being able to make a repayment. Because essentially what you're doing is you're passing the baton on to someone else who needs that support.

Tererai Trent (44:52):

And women are good at that. Yeah. Yeah.

Lisa Larter (44:57):

Yeah, very good at that. When you look at what you're doing right now in raising money to send these students to university, what do you hope they will do as a result of getting this education? When you think about your dreams and what your mother instilled upon you in giving back to your community, is there a bigger outcome that you're hoping to see from the work that you're doing in terms of the change that happens in the world?

Tererai Trent (45:38):

All I can do is to try to cultivate the spirit of giving back to these students. I am thinking one day when they're done with their education, they'll find someone and say, "Yes, I've been here. I stand on someone else shoulders. Can you also stand on my shoulder?" As human beings, we are here for a purpose, and it's always good to find who we are and what our purpose. And if our purpose can be connected to uplifting humanity, that's the best thing that we can do. Humankind is not more than the word of life. We are but one thread. Whatever we do to the thread, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things are connected. Our very survival is connected to the survival of others. So I want to believe that we are interconnected and we need to be there for each other.

Lisa Larter (47:11):

So what do you say to someone who feels like their donation or their contribution isn't enough? You have said that no donation is too small. I think

about you and I think about the impact that those small donations, those dollars, those pennies, those vegetables and fruits made collectively.

Tererai Trent (47:41):

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Cumulatively, they become more meaningful. Because I know there was a woman who donated five cents and the headman was telling me, "She said, 'This is all I have.'" And I know some who donated who sold their goat. But when you put all that together, it becomes more powerful. That's why I say it's our collective that's going to change the world. It's not our silos. But when we come together as women or as men and women, we can change the world.

Lisa Larter (48:29):

Absolutely. What is your goal? How many students do you want to see go to university through your foundation in the next 10 years?

Tererai Trent (48:46):

Well, I can think about if we can get 20 students every year into university, that would be the best. The first year we had three students, the second year we had 20 students. And then we had another addition that would make it to 28. And this year we have 11. So there were some students who came in mid-year, and we had to accommodate those. We are also educating some of our teachers who didn't have university degrees and they want to go back, and we say, "Sure, we can help you." And these are women teachers, female teachers.

Lisa Larter (49:46):

So 20 a year, which means essentially we need to find a way to raise at least \$200,000 a year for education.

Tererai Trent (49:54):

Yeah. Yeah.

Lisa Larter (49:55):

Which doesn't seem like a really big goal when you think about it. It's \$4,000 a week.

Tererai Trent (50:04):

It surprised me when we did this fundraising that we're talking about. We wanted to raise 100,000. That's our goal, that's our campaign goal. And within 14 days, we had raised \$64,000 of the 100,000. I was afraid to even ask for anyone to invest in our education. I was afraid people will be running away from me. They will think I am overbearing. "Oh my gosh, here she comes again." It's just my little fears, my little hungers. There are people who are out there who are saying, "Yes, we want to help you." And within few days, I was looking and I'm thinking, "Oh my gosh, now we have 23,000. Within 11 days, we have 57,000. Within 14 days, we have 64,000." Goodness, Lord, people are generous, and I just saw that and... It's humbling because I was sitting in my corner and judging, "Oh, no I don't think they'll do it." And here I am. The world is showing me, "No, we care."

Lisa Larter (51:28):

Do you know why I was so quick to donate?

Tererai Trent (51:31):

Yeah, you were one of the first.

Lisa Larter (51:33):

But do you know why I said yes right away?

Tererai Trent (51:36):

I don't know.

Lisa Larter (51:38):

Because you have accomplished so much, your story is so powerful, and yet you remain humble and gracious and kind and accessible to other people. I mean, you have been named one of the most inspiring women in the world. But you do not walk with an air of, "I'm better than anyone." You've accomplished so much and yet you are such a kind and generous and accessible person. I remember when I bought your book for all of the women that attended the Beach House with me, and somebody tweeted to you about your book and you responded and I responded, and then you said, "Hey, well, maybe I'll Skype in and say hello." And you Skyped in and said hello, and those women will forever remember a few moments that you took to be kind and to inspire them.

Lisa Larter (52:56):

And so I think that we see people who accomplish a lot of things in life, and then they become, "Do you know who I am?" That's the attitude or the air about them. They become too self-important. I look at the work that you do, and I feel like I am inspired by what you have accomplished. I am inspired by your ongoing commitment to giving back and then energized by your kindness, your humanity, the person that you are. And so, I will always say yes because of who you are. And that is why.

Tererai Trent (53:48):

Now you want to make me cry. Oh, thank you, Lisa, I really appreciate that. Gosh, I should thank my mother and my grandmother because they always say to me, "Tererai, here on earth we are climbing this invisible ladder, and the invisible ladder, it has its own invisible laws, the laws that we need to adhere to. The ladder has rungs. As we climb that ladder and stepping on each rung, there are women who are at the very top of the ladder. They have this moral obligation to be humble enough to look down at the women who are at the very bottom of the ladder and reach out and bring them up to that highest level of the ladder."

Tererai Trent (54:58):

I always think about that because my mother said, "That's what gives me joy in this life." I have found my purpose in that. I am not saying this like I am Mother Teresa, no, I have my own weaknesses. But I believe in humanity and I believe in women and girls because I carried those wounds and I suffered with those wounds. I don't want to see anyone going through what I had gone through. In my organization, I don't get a salary from my organization, no. Every proceed will go to where it's meant to be. I don't. I don't. We have a Country Director, we have a team. We work with volunteers. We have very few people who get paid, and it's not much that they get paid for. Because we want to make sure that what we're doing, we are able to do it with integrity, with knowing we are using someone else's money.

Lisa Larter (56:27):

Yeah. It's amazing. Well, I'm going to include the link in the show notes for any of you who are hoping or are listening and would like to make a donation. You can go to tererai.org, and you can read more about Tererai, read more about her work, but I will put the specific link into the show notes.

This is what I'm going to do. If you go to lisalarter.com/tererai, T-E-R-E-R-A-I, it will take you directly to the donation page if you would like to make a donation to help these students go to university. So that's lisalarter.com/tererai. Our team will have a redirect set up so that it goes directly to the donation page. I want to remind you that any donation makes a difference. Consider yourself part of the team that is contributing to making a difference for others. Don't look at your donation as needing to be a certain amount to be valued. All donations are valuable. I think that the best story that demonstrates that is really Tererai's own story in telling us exactly what she went through to fulfill her dreams and get the education that she got and to make this difference.

Lisa Larter (57:57):

If you haven't read *The Awakened Woman*, highly recommend you read this book. Somebody recently asked me, "What is the one book that you have given the most copies of away?" And your book was the book that I answered that question to because I have given so many people a copy of that book, because it is just such a beautiful story. Your story is incredible, but the way that you inspire us to consider what breaks our heart and how understanding what breaks our heart is really the gateway into the dreams that we can have for life to make a difference. It's your story, but I read your story and I walk away feeling like I am a different person. I mean, at that Beach House Mastermind, we buried our dreams on the beach. We did that work together collectively because of your book. It is that powerful.

Tererai Trent (59:03):

Oh, thank you, thank you. I love to hear that. I love to hear women burying their dreams. And remember, the word bury and plant are the same in my culture. So it's planting your dreams so you can see them grow and grow. Sometimes when we say bury, it might mean you're burying and forgetting it. But in my language, the word bury and plant... Sometimes when we put seeds into the ground, we bury the seed with soil because we want to protect the seeds from termites, from pests and from too much rain. And so when we bury our dreams with intent, we are cultivating an inspiration for us. We are covering and protecting our dreams from naysayers, protecting our dreams from fear. Because when you plant it with intent, you're planting a belief and energizing the universe, God, to protect your dreams.

Lisa Larter (1:00:22):

Beautifully said. I love that. It's amazing. All right, Tererai, any final things that you would like to say to those people who are listening before we wrap this up?

Tererai Trent (1:00:36):

Just to say, tinogana, it is achievable. I want you to believe in your dreams. Even if you have put your dream somewhere on the shelf, please dust them and go back and find meaning in this life.

Lisa Larter (1:00:56):

I love that. Thank you very much. I really appreciate you saying yes to having this conversation with me, and I can't wait to watch these 11 students go to university because it is achievable.

Tererai Trent (1:01:06):

Thank you.

Lisa Larter (1:01:06):

And they will go, we know that for sure.

Tererai Trent (1:01:09):

Thank you. Thank you so much, Lisa. I appreciate. Thank you.

Lisa (1:01:13):

Thank you.

Lisa Larter (1:01:14):

Thank you for joining me for this episode of She Talks Business. If you enjoyed the show, you know the drill, leave us a review, tell someone about it and join the conversation on social media. Thanks for listening and until next time remember, done is always better than perfect.



Lisa Larter is a Business Strategist, Digital Marketing Expert, Author and Speaker.

The Lisa Larter Group helps their clients to formulate marketing strategies that support their business goals and objectives. Lisa provides consulting & advisory services, and implementation services including: social media & content management, book marketing, and website design.

Tererai Trent is an Author, Speaker, Scholar, Humanitarian and Founder of Tererai Trent International.

Tererai grew up in a cattle-herding family in rural Zimbabwe, where she dreamed of getting an education, but was married at a young age and had three children by the time she was eighteen. Undeterred by traditional women's role and cultural norms, she determinedly taught herself to read and write from her brother's schoolbooks. Her steadfast determination, hard work and belief in her dreams eventually earned her multiple degrees, and a prominent global platform with world leaders and international audiences where she advocates for quality education for all. Tererai founded Tererai Trent International (TTI), whose mission is to provide universal access to quality education to children regardless of their gender or socio-economic backgrounds, and also to empower rural communities. Click [here](#) to read more about Tererai Trent.

