

SMFA Summit Interview with Dayeanne Hutton, premiering 25 May 2021, 10am PDT

Bonnie Gillespie

I'm so excited to welcome back one of my very favorite people. It's Twitch superstar Dayeanne Hutton. Hi, Daye.

Dayeanne Hutton

Hello. Hi. I'm a superstar.

Bonnie Gillespie

Superstar. Superstar. In fact, you are one of the few people that I know who makes a living Twitching.

Dayeanne Hutton

I do.

Bonnie Gillespie

Can you talk about that a little bit because I think that's something that, in a lot of minds is a, that's not really a thing. It's like the influencer life. Is that real? Can you talk a little about how that came to be?

Dayeanne Hutton

Sure. Yeah, and first, I'm like, I still I supplement with, it's still influencer stuff though, like brand deals as well. And I was on unemployment in the, in the Panera Bread, but, um, I do, it is my like fulltime job. I'm no longer at a bar or anything like that. I... Okay, this is really, this goes way back. But when I was in college, I knew a fashion blogger, and I knew that she would just get like boxes of things sent to her, just to post about, and I just went, that's gonna be me someday.

Bonnie Gillespie

Yeah, I like that.

Dayeanne Hutton

Like, like I was like, I want that life I just want people to send me stuff to talk about it. And so since then you know I had, I had my own fashion blog for a few years, and then it moved to like just bein' on Instagram and then it moved to being on Twitch. And so, I do have those other social medias that bolster it, and I'm I'm coming up on four years of Twitch, so it takes time. It definitely takes time and patience and and shaking it up and trying new things, but it's, it is possible. And I don't really know what else... it, like everyone comes... just like with acting everyone comes to it on their own path, so there is no like set thing to do except keep trying and be consistent.

Bonnie Gillespie

I was gonna say if there's one thing that is true no matter whose path we're looking at, consistency is always a part of the recipe.

Dayeanne Hutton

Yeah, yeah, especially with Twitch because you become like people's TV shows, so like, you know if "Grey's Anatomy" changed what time and day it was on every week like they would not be on still so...

Bonnie Gillespie

Or if they decided.... Yes, if they decided to go months between and not even running reruns like there's no contact whatsoever....

Dayeanne Hutton

We'll technically you'd be John Oliver, but...

Bonnie Gillespie

Good point. Good point. Fair enough. There, there are exceptions to every rule, that's true. Tell me a little bit about that consistency and showing up, even at the beginning, or when it looked like, "This is just... I'm doing so much and there's not the payoff yet." What, what allowed you to keep showing up for yourself really?

Dayeanne Hutton

Started really slow. I knew that if I tried to come up with a schedule, I would immediately get overwhelmed and not follow it. So, I told myself, stream every Friday. If you could stream every Friday, then you can think about streaming another day during the week.

Bonnie Gillespie

I like it.

Dayeanne Hutton

And so, it wasn't until I was consistently able to show up on Friday that I was like, "Cool, now I'm ready to add a day." And that's what I did until I was doing three days a week, and then five days a week and now it's four days a week because you have to adjust for what you're capable of in that moment. Like for a while I was totally able to do five days a week, and then I wasn't. So, I changed it because I could do that, because I'm in charge.

Bonnie Gillespie

And I just that being in charge to me feels so delicious that when I start to get, like, really hard on myself about missing a deadline I go, "Who, who made that deadline, Gillespie? Who, who made that deadline?" I'm like, "Oh, I did. That's my deadline for my business that I'm running. I

can actually adjust things," and that's not blowing off a deadline. That is making an adjustment because you learn what your capacity is, I think.

Dayeanne Hutton

Yeah, and it's I'm learning that it's fluid. Like your capacity is definitely very fluid and which is something I'm working with right now with trying to find balance in.

Bonnie Gillespie

Let's talk about that because fluid capacity is such a big biggie for me in terms of just how much I can take on, like what's happening in the world, how I feel about all the things coming at us at all times. And I know you use social media a lot. And that means we're also exposing ourselves to a lot of energy. How do you check your levels, and adjust in ways that are really kind to your system?

Dayeanne Hutton

I... something I've learned about myself through some close friends pointing it out is that I often... I don't recognize when I'm near burnout, because, because I have six planets in Capricorn and I love to work.

Bonnie Gillespie

Who told you that?

Dayeanne Hutton

I'm a workaholic, but I'm starting to just be more aware of like, okay, I think this is me, approaching burnout. Okay, I think this is me needing to take a break. I'm still working on it. Absolutely. Right now, I'm trying to find a balance in just the home life of still being in quarantine and realizing that I need... I'm needing to make a more structured schedule for myself because I'm just, I can't figure out if I should relax, or if I should work and then I do half of both and accomplish neither well. So, so I'm doing schedules, I'm just trying to listen to myself more. I am fortunate that I know that my Twitch audience is very forgiving and I'm very transparent with them and I'm like, "Hey, for my mental health, I'm gonna change my schedule, because I need three days in a row off now, not every other day." And they're like, "Good job. Way to put your mental health first. You're awesome." And I'm like, "Thank you."

Bonnie Gillespie

How do you how do you decide where that line is? Because you know I'm also a pull back the curtain and show everybody everything. I'm out about all my shit. There still sometimes is stuff that is not pull back the curtain and show all the things. How do you navigate what feels safe to share with such a large audience of strangers?

Dayeanne Hutton

I... I've been like a mental health advocate from the start on Twitch. And so, with that I'm always, you know I'm very open about like what I'm dealing with and I'm very open about like, "Oh, I have these things and I'm on these. I've taken medication for and I am seeing a therapist." Like I don't go into details about my, my therapy but...

Bonnie Gillespie

"Let me tell you what we just talked about."

Dayeanne Hutton

Yeah, I, ...I actually something amazing just happened where I put out a tweet but I wasn't even, I just thought it was funny. I was like, "Oh my god, I used to hate 'The Office' and think it was a terrible show and I'm only realizing now that it wasn't until I went on anxiety meds I started finding it funny. Because my personal threshold for anxiety was already so high, I couldn't take the cringe comedy." And I had that revelation and I tweeted it and I'm someone in my community actually was like, "Oh, that's very interesting. I'm going to talk to my doctor about going on medication." And they just talked to me today and we're like, "I feel a little bit better now." I was like... that was, I was not. That's not... I thought I was just funny observation on myself, so it's like, things you don't even realize can really change people's lives. And it was just like, "This is why I did this, is why I'm open about it because it took me so long to come to it and realize it for myself." Like if, if me talking about it can make other people people feel more comfortable. All right.

Bonnie Gillespie

Totally worth it. Totally worth it. I love that so much and I think back to, you know, taking Keith to a movie that was incredibly violent and him saying we have to leave. And going, "God, what's wrong?" and now understanding... it fits in exactly that space, that when you're at a certain relationship with your own stuff, there's just some things that you can't, you can't have come at you. How do you handle things like stuff that comes at you from social media from having a pretty active fanbase that likes to get your attention? How do you regulate that amount of energy, I guess?

Dayeanne Hutton

I'm pretty lucky. They're pretty. They're pretty respectful. I have a I have a Discord specifically for them so, so I do sometimes, people try and private message me on Instagram and I'm like, "This is... you have access to me on so many places. I'm not answering your private message on Instagram. Like you can go to my Discord, my Twitter, my, my Twitch and I will talk to you." But like I'm that's kind of like my following. And so, like Instagram and Facebook that, I don't even go on Facebook, but like those are places where I don't really let people in in that way, 'cause I'm like, I've opened myself up in all these places. And luckily, I still have with streaming, I have mods that can also help me with... if people come with like problems they're

having and stuff like that I can help a kind of delegate with with mods as well and be like, "Hey, can you talk to them about this? Like, I don't feel comfortable doing it," or something like that.

Bonnie Gillespie

Like steer them toward some resources and things like that?

Dayeanne Hutton

Yeah, yeah, and I also have that... I'm an ambassador for Take This, and they're an organization that helps to end the stigma of mental health. And they have a resources page that I send to people a lot because it's super comprehensive. It goes over like apps and hotlines and websites like all over the world. So, I'm always just like, "Here, please, like, please take this." So yeah.

Bonnie Gillespie

One of my favorite things to talk with you about when it comes to just that online presence of yours is how, like, actually how we monetize a Twitch experience. Because I think for a lot of people that just seems like, "I don't even understand how that works." I know last year when we had a conversation like this, we had people who had never even been to Twitch, didn't know what it was, who now have money coming in off Twitch. And could you, I know we're revisiting a conversation we had last year but can you talk a little bit about what that process is like?

Dayeanne Hutton

Yeah, so, when you get on Twitch, you have to first make affiliate status, which they make pretty easy. I think you need like 5 consecutive viewers and 50 followers and you need to stream like 6 days out of the month. It's not exact but something like that. And once you hit that, then you have a subscribe button, and then the subscribe button is where you make a lot of your money, because there's 3 tiers, and it's like \$4.99, \$14.99, \$24.99. And you, you get half, thanks Twitch, and Twitch takes the other half. And then you can also... people cheer bitties and each bit is a, is a cent. And you, so they'll cheer like 100 bitties maybe just like, that's like giving you \$1. And then people can also you can set up just a donation, like where people can just like direct donate to you through Paypal or, or something else. And so those are like the three ways that you can make your money and then outside of that, there's like, like brand deals you can do or, or like streaming a game or promoting a game that you can also make some money from as well.

Bonnie Gillespie

And so, if you're not a game person is there is Twitch the right platform?

Dayeanne Hutton

Yeah, yeah, I'm one of the people who I took some, some kind of like consultation meetings last year, after after this. And one of the people was wanting to focus on like more like reading stories and, like, educating in that way. There's so many categories on Twitch, literally

everything you can think of is done on Twitch at this point. If it's like you know if it's done on YouTube, you can do it on Twitch, you're just doing it live.

Bonnie Gillespie

Yeah, That's it. Oh man, it's so cool, it's so cool I love it.

Dayeanne Hutton

People are doing like improv shows on Twitch now, like especially with the pandemic and stuff like possibilities.

Bonnie Gillespie

Infinite. That's one of my favorite things about being a creative and being a storyteller like we surround ourselves with people who come up with the most creative ways out of every problem. It's like you name anything that got difficult it's like we're gonna get creative about how to do this. Where does your creativity come from, like if you know? I don't know. I've just always, it's just always been there. I think it comes from... It's like you never put it away when you were a kid. Like you just... you kept it.

Dayeanne Hutton

Yeah, I loved, I learned to read really young and I always loved books. And so, like from that was like the fantasy that you get to, you get brought into in the books. And then like, when I got older, I used to always like pretend, you know... I'd be like looking out the car, back of a car window like staring out and my brain would be like, "God, this could be a shot in a movie you know like when the kid is in the back just staring out the window." Like, I just, I was also an only child, so maybe just came from being lonely sometimes.

Bonnie Gillespie

Fair enough. I'll take it. Something we talked about before we started rolling that I would like to bring on to this conversation is issues like imposter syndrome, and what I call low enoughness. And those moments where I mean, you know, you can look at the numbers, you know you have an audience, you know you're doing stuff that attracts people and brings money your way, and and you know you're good at what you do, there's still this voice that sometimes gets a spotlight put on it. A little more attention put on it, that we label as imposter syndrome or, or the low enoughness thing. What what do you do when that shows up?

Dayeanne Hutton

Ah, yeah, I, it depends. It depends on like how it's, how it's coming at me. Like, lately I have been having a hard time being on social media because whereas like several weeks ago, reading about like all my streamer friends' accomplishments was like hyping me up and I was like, "Yeah, we're in this together and you're doing awesome stuff and I'm doing awesome stuff." And then all of a sudden, the bottom just dropped out of that and I was like, "I'm not working hard enough, nothing I'm doing is, is good enough." And it was just this really harsh switch and

so like with that, it's like, okay, stop. Like you need to step away from social media for a little bit. Other times I like to remind myself that, even though I'm trying to get somewhere and I'm looking at people wishing I was there, there are people looking at me like that.

Bonnie Gillespie

Yeah, oh yeah.

Dayeanne Hutton

And and I need to, and that like helps me feel a lot more grateful for where I am. Just being like, I am someone's goal right now. So, I want to like sit and appreciate that. And just writing down wins. Just writing down, like anything, any little thing, especially if I'm feeling imposter syndrome like ok, sit down. What have we been doing? And then it right out. I'm like, "Oh wow, okay, that is a lot. All right, we can calm down."

Bonnie Gillespie

I think that's a really smart tactic of, like, I mean almost ritualizing a date with yourself to to get those wins listed out. Because you're right. We get so focused on the next goal and the next goal and the next that it's really tough to remember that there was a time when our wildest dreams were that we would be where we are right now. And that needs to be celebrated. That's like, yes, good news, win. Yes.

Dayeanne Hutton

Like a nice I'll do what your... I'll say your phrase "this or something better," I'll be like, I love this, this right now rocks or something better.

Bonnie Gillespie

I'm open.

Dayeanne Hutton

But like...

Bonnie Gillespie

Yeah, but I'm not gonna stop loving this.

Dayeanne Hutton

Yeah.

Bonnie Gillespie

Yeah. I think there's this thing in the brain, I know, you know -- Bonnie Gillespie drinking game alert -- every time I say patriarchy, take a drink and you'll be drunk by noon. I think a lot of it is patriarchal programming of, you know the hustle culture and we have to work harder and we have to strive for more, instead of understanding that strive yes because stretching feels good.

Because growth feels good. Because it's nice to have a goal and achieve it or even get closer to it, but be satisfied with where we are. Not with fear of, "Oh, I'm going to be complacent. Just, I really dig where I am. My life right this second is pretty fucking awesome."

Dayeanne Hutton

Yeah, yeah...

Bonnie Gillespie

We forget to do that.

Dayeanne Hutton

Yeah, just like training your brain to like stop, and like, appreciate and luxuriate in like where you are right now. Like, "Yeah, I have goals but like, right now it's cool too."

Bonnie Gillespie

So cool. So cool. Tell me how you see Hollywood, and you know we're talking this summit about, you know, #CreatingTheHollywoodWeWant. Where do you see storytelling going and shifting and our role in it, in terms of people who are creating their own content and showing up and building an audience organically? Like where does that all that fit in with where we're headed?

Dayeanne Hutton

I have such a complicated relationship with Hollywood right now. And I am excited for us to build the one we want, but I'm... I see it... I see a lot of change needing to happen in order for us to have it, because I feel like our systems in charge have not moved with the times and they are hurting us a lot. And so, I see a lot more content creation happening because traditional routes are kind of barred to a lot of us right now. So, I think if we just keep... We just have to keep creating, because that's what we're here to do like it create stuff, and try and help the systems along. I'm in a very weird flux place with it all right now. I'm very frustrated with a lot of stuff I'm seeing. So, I'm hoping for some change and some revolution.

Bonnie Gillespie

Same, same. I think, especially with, you know systems and unions and studios and networks... I mean there's so much structure that everything becomes slower when it becomes bigger. And what I love about the independent content creator and the micro studio, and, you know, pop up, what's the next new social media thing like is that it, it's allowing us to be nimble and to stay creative and to find our audience. To really have that niche and and develop a clear voice. That then, as the system does begin to change because enough people are on the inside now, here's the difference between now and 30 years ago. 30 years ago, it's us on the outside going, "Oh please, if you would just let us in, so we would have a chance."

And now it's like we got people on the inside. We actually have the ability as some of these dinosaurs die off to actually talk some shit up in here. Like we really can. And we're and we're seeing that happen, even with.... There's a new commercial running that Donzell, a fellow summit-member/ninja was in that, I'm like, he's in full drag, and this commercial is celebrating family of choice. And it is a car commercial, like a network, car commercial celebrating family of choice, and how we may not be aligned with our, our family of birth. And just the messaging of that I'm like, "That's not nothing." That that is a car company making a decision to put a certain message out there, and not just in like, "Well, this is a, the official commercial that we'll allow happen, to happen over here," they're actually taking to the airwaves, and they're not the only ones. In some major ways. I am seeing more opportunity for change, now, in a way that excites me.

And it feels like it is the the season for everyone who does already have a muscle for creating content because how do you take advantage of opportunities when suddenly they become available, if you've been sitting in a place of, "Well, I'll wait and get ready for when they need me. You know someday they'll need me 'til then I don't need to learn how to do this," if instead we've been going, "I'm ready. I'm doing it myself, I... screw you, I won't even wait for you I'm just gonna do it." And then they say, "Okay, come on in," like, Great.

Dayeanne Hutton

Yeah, that like brings to mind like what, another thing I wanted to say was, especially with with the lockdown and everything that's been happening. I think right now, like the one of the good things to do is bringing them like 90% made stuff, and being like, okay, there's only this many auditions and whatever whatever but look at this entire series I have funded and have shot the first episode for. I'm like, isn't this just an easy thing for you to do since and you don't have to do a thing. You just have to put it on the air, like, I think that's where we're at right now and that might be like a post COVID specific thing but...

Bonnie Gillespie

But it's a window of opportunity.

Dayeanne Hutton

Yeah, yeah. Window of opportunity.

Bonnie Gillespie

When there has been this this space for content to be created by folks and then brought... and you're right it's like 90% done, like seriously, "You don't have to lift a finger and you're gonna make all the money. Come on suits, like, take a chance." But we're making it ridiculously easy for them to say yes. And then we have the reach and the fanbase there that allows it to continue and the momentum for that, for me, just feels incredibly exciting.

Dayeanne Hutton

Yeah, yeah. And I don't know if this is just me coming to the realization or and just being at that spot or if this has been a big change recently of me just being like, wow, like most, I don't, at least for me, I'm like, I'm like not gonna get jobs the normal audition room. It's just not my, that's just not my path. And I'm starting to come to terms with that and so I'm starting to like try and figure out like okay so then how do I... how do I go about this. I was like, that's not for me. I still want to do this so let's figure it out.

Bonnie Gillespie

And the fact that it is something that you can figure out. You can try enough different ways, because you're right, there's no one way in. There's a way most people kind of do some linear progress but there's not really that. The business doesn't have that. Like, even life out, outside of showbiz doesn't have that anymore, that's like, "Work this job and then get your promotion and get your raise and then get your you know, take retirement your 401k...." That's not a thing anymore. Yeah. "What was that like, grandpa?"

Dayeanne Hutton

Must have been nice... job security, who knows?

Bonnie Gillespie

What is that? That's one of the ways that I think that quarantinetimes really did everyone a favor in terms of listening now to the way artists and creatives have always had to get creative about where our money is gonna come from. Suddenly people with real jobs were like, "Where'd it go? I don't have my job anymore. What do I do..." and you're like...

Dayeanne Hutton

And I, yeah, I've seen friends forced into their dream job by it, because they lost the security they were so afraid to leave, and they were forced out of it and now it's like well, guess you better follow your dreams now.

Bonnie Gillespie

There's nothing stopping you now.

Dayeanne Hutton

Yeah.

Bonnie Gillespie

So true. So would you say... we'll we'll wrap on this... would you say you are living your dreams?

Dayeanne Hutton

Yes! I, several years ago, started like hashtagging some of my like posts with just like, like living my best nerd life and I AM living my best nerd life. I tout myself as a professional nerd. I finally figured out that's my brand umbrella: it's professional nerd. I, you know, that's, it's how I... it's in my email signatures, like, yeah. I'm doing nerdy stuff for a living and I could not be happier.

Bonnie Gillespie

Amazing, amazing. Dayeanne, thank you so much. Will you tell everyone how they can stalk you, subscribe to you, throw bitties at you, whatever, all the places.

Dayeanne Hutton

Yes, so my Twitch and Instagram are both at @dayebraham_Lincoln, with a D A Y E, and then everything else is DayeanneHatton: Twitter, YouTube, website, etc.

Bonnie Gillespie

Awesome. Daye, thank you so much. I adore you and I so appreciate you being a part of this again.

Dayeanne Hutton

Thank you.