

**SMFA Summit Interview with Rhianna Basore, premiering 20 May 2021, 10am PDT**

**Bonnie Gillespie**

Everyone, I'm so excited to bring to you one of my very favorite people, it's Rhianna Basore. How are you Rhianna?

**Rhianna Basore**

I'm doing fantastic Bonnie. How are you?

**Bonnie Gillespie**

I'm great. Thank you so much for joining me today.

**Rhianna Basore**

It's my pleasure.

**Bonnie Gillespie**

Let's dive in on Self Trust Fund, can you start us off with some conversation about money and mindset and the creative brain, and where all of that intersects.

**Rhianna Basore**

Absolutely, it's a personal favorite topic, so I'm glad we're starting there.

**Bonnie Gillespie**

Great.

**Rhianna Basore**

I truly believe that creativity is the innovative superpower that we need for what's coming next in our culture. Like, I think we need creative brains to build the next great thing that's going to come and make everything we're doing now even better. But as a personal creative myself, there's this mindset that gets in our way. And it was one that really, I struggled with in my early career which is, creativity isn't valued, therefore my offerings aren't valued. And I would work all around the country as a theatre artist, as a writer, as a storyteller, and I never felt like the money matched up with the level of effort that I was putting in. And what I internalized was, I wasn't valuable.

And slowly through peeling back the layers of that onion and a couple of Come To Jesus moments like life gives you, I realized that really it was my mindset that was holding me back. I was looking to be approved by getting a job, rather than owning my own creativity. And it's only through owning it that I have been able to see the power that we as creatives offer to the marketplace, and also to other human beings beyond just our talent for hire. And so, it's really become a personal mission for me to empower creatives to own and harness that creativity in a

financially and business-minded way that allows them to benefit from it, but also the rest of us can benefit from the genius that's created that we all need.

### **Bonnie Gillespie**

Gosh, that's such a beautiful mission just on so many levels. But I know that you bump up, you've come in, come in, come up against these... and I'm saying "you" but I need to own it, \*I\* come up against these issues of, "It's so much fun, and it's so easy, and I'm so good at it, how dare I charge what I'm worth?" And I even the fact that I have to do air quotes around it shows the stickiness that comes around being an artist, being a creative, and also saying: "There's value here. And we need to put a pricetag on that." How do you even begin to, you know -- coach me here -- how do you even begin to break down some of those walls, when you start to realize that this is just a feeling that I have about the way the world is as opposed to something that I can actually navigate and change my mindset about?

### **Rhianna Basore**

Absolutely. So, the world does have stumbling blocks, we're not mis-taking that, but the great thing is, is that I call them money monsters. They're like the monsters under your bed, right? You turn the light on, there's nothing actually there. But you have the lights off, you're pretty sure there's something there that's gonna eat you in your sleep. And so, once you realize and identify what the money monster is that you're facing, whether it's, "I have too much fun, how can I charge for this?" or "Other people don't see the value so therefore it doesn't have value," whatever your money monster might be -- and believe me, I've found a lot in my work with creatives both my own work, and with other creatives -- once you identify it, you can start to be in conversation, because really the money monster is keeping you safe. It is telling you, "Hey, if you go that way danger happens." And guess what, sometimes that's true.

I mean you don't get eaten by a Tyrannosaurus anymore, but you could get hit by a Mack truck; that part is real. You've got to check both ways before you cross the street. And that's all the money monster's doing is it's saying, "Hey, this is what other people do." That's how we stay safe. And that's one of the things that you talk about too, Bonnie, is like to lead is to be brave. And as creatives, we are not only putting ourselves and our genius out there but we're building business structures that don't exist otherwise. And they need us to do that because we're visionaries. And so, when we tap into what lights us up, what gives us that joy and that play, it's magnetic. I truly believe that's where charisma comes from. And when you show up, lit up fully in your joy, everyone goes, "Wait, what's that?"

### **Bonnie Gillespie**

Yeah.

### **Rhianna Basore**

Because when I look at the marketplace, I really see people looking to buy happiness. And so, if you come with your own brand of happiness, everyone's going to be like, "Hmm. That's very

interesting." We want to work with the person who feels great. We want to buy the product from the person who seems like they got it all put together. And it's not a facade. It's something you're actually experiencing, and that is an act of service in this world. I really truly believe as creatives, and I'm also a yoga teacher in my other life, that we come from a place of service. We are here to provide the foundation for the beauty and the peace that's coming next. And if we don't show up aligned in our happiness and our joy, how can we offer the best of what we are? We are not truly serving. And that includes feeling financially insecure when we're putting our full heart and soul out on the line. There's just no need.

### **Bonnie Gillespie**

That's so beautiful and I love how holistic that is as it ties in with everything from the way we treat our bodies to the way we treat our art. And then also having that uncomfortable conversation about what money needs to look like. And the word that you used that really inspired me on this, now, is when we're talking about the money monsters you said there's a conversation to have. And I think so often we'll identify a block or a monster and go, "Kill it." Like, "End it." And you're doing something a little different with your work and it is inviting the conversation and not trying to shut it down. Can you -- for people watching who might want to start having their own conversations -- talk about what that could look like?

### **Rhianna Basore**

Absolutely, so I really believe in being in conversation with your money monster. You have to directly ask it: "What is it that you're afraid of? What is the worst possible scenario that can arise out of this?" Sometimes a mirror is a great exercise. Sometimes chair work -- they do this in therapy. You can imagine the money monster embodied as a person, as themselves, as someone in your life who used that language with you, and directly speak to them. A journal is another great way to do this. And through that dialogue, you can really peel back those layers to understand the nugget of truth. Because that's what the money monster is overblown trying to tell you is this nugget of truth that you're not paying enough attention to. And once you get to it, well you can deal with it. Right? There's no problems we can face we can't not deal with once we know what they are. And so, once the money monster feels seen and heard, and that truth is out to be dealt with, we've erased the fear, the drama, the stress, and we can look at it objectively and say, "All right, well now what do I do about this?"

### **Bonnie Gillespie**

And then that's where we can look to other resources if we... 'cause as soon as you said... "Well, we can deal with it once we know what it is," I'm like or, or can we? Because there is that part in the brain that says, this may be outside my scope of experience. I don't have resources once I learn what this is and so it's easier to just not look at my money. That's a big one I see with artists. "I'm just not even gonna look at my money. I'm not going to think about how far in debt I am. I'm not going to talk about the credit card balance or whatever because it's just too scary." When we're entering into that conversation, what are some techniques, if you have any, for turning down that volume on, "But what if I don't know?" And talking about how maybe we,

we do have resources that we can't even see when we're too scared of the monster under the bed?

### **Rhianna Basore**

Absolutely. There's so many fantastic ones. So, a great example is mantras. I'm a huge believer in tapping into your heartbeat, and having a mantra. Denise DT has a great one, "I serve; I deserve." I love that one. I also think, "I am enough," so simple and so true. I have found in my yoga work that just because you can't do it yet doesn't mean it's not coming. And so, trusting the process of knowing that handstand is coming, that debt payoff is coming, the next big job is coming is so much of the work. So that might be meditation, it might be breathwork, it might be yoga, it might be exercise. Whatever you need to do to release the stress around it, so you can re-form the thoughts in your brain to say, "Okay, I can look at this and not have an emotional reaction. I can simply begin to consider: What are the steps? Who do I know? What do I know? Who can I ask? Where can I go?" The five questions, right? Who, what, where, when, and why. And then you just start to peel away at it, and whether it's money or relationships or thrival job stress, there are answers everywhere. It's that we don't see them when we're focused on the problem.

### **Bonnie Gillespie**

Ooh, say more about that, because as you know, we know we're talking about creating the Hollywood we want with all of this work that we're doing together here. There, there's so much energy on the problem, whether we're talking very large systemic issues that very much need spotlight shone on them, down to the "I don't have enough money in the bank" problem. What is your technique for, or a technique for, shifting from problem-focused to solution but aware of the problem obviously because you can't, like I said, put your head in the sand about it but you also don't want to become so aware of it that it's all you see.

### **Rhianna Basore**

Right, exactly. You do want to have a full awareness of the situation. You want to really get in there and analyze it, but then it's about looking up at the horizon. So that's where you create abundance magnets, right? You have that image, or that saying, that you surround yourself with that allows you to feel that feeling. And really, it's about the feeling it inspires, not the object itself, that gives you that sense of hope. In yoga we call it the intention or the mala or the mandala. It's the thing that grounds you in the feeling you want to have. And when you look up at the horizon, when you look at that idea, you're beginning to vibrate at that higher level, which then allows you to, to filter through the problems to see what the potential solutions are. Sometimes it's the smallest just rejiggering of focus or understanding, and then it opens up like a book. I really don't believe that the transformation is that far away. It's that we're in a fog, and we have to clear the fog away.

### **Bonnie Gillespie**

I love that. And for me, it's a... when we're in that problem-focus we have so much energy around the resistance and the trying to live our lives despite the problem, that once we're able to go, "Well let's just dispassionately assess it, let's just label it objectively, here's what we're dealing with," it actually allows all this energy to free up and create so much space for miracles and solutions to fly in from all sorts of directions.

### **Rhianna Basore**

Yes, exactly because I truly believe that spirit and creativity and love are the same thing. And so, when you remove the covers on that, you are limitless being that can fly. My favorite feeling is when I'm turned on, either in a moment of connection or creativity, and you are seeking to have that experience by removing the burden. And how ever you need to do that it is then that you have limitless possibilities. Because as a child, you're like, "Oh I need something to do. Oh, I have this blanket. It's a cape, no now it's a fort. No, now I'm a burrito. No, now I'm a pancake." And you still have the same problem which is there's nothing else you want to do, but you've created joy from it. And in that you have manifested all of these miracles that are simply your own creativity manifested in the world.

### **Bonnie Gillespie**

Ooh that's so beautiful. I love that and I that that visual is just so vivid and clear and that's the energy we want to tap into as adults, is get back to that place of infinite possibility even if we're in limited resources.

### **Rhianna Basore**

Yes, because it is when we look beyond the limit of our resources that we see the abundance beyond it. And it is challenging, and it is a muscle that we have to build because unfortunately we live in an analytical culture that focuses on problems. But as you build the muscle to look beyond, to fill your lungs bigger, to gaze at the horizon, you realize how many things you're overlooking just in your minute-to-minute life.

### **Bonnie Gillespie**

Gosh, that's good, that's so good. So, Rhianna, you mentioned that you have a yoga instructor life, obviously you're an actor, you have this wonderful money business where you help people with mindset work. Can you talk about how you balance all the different things that you do, I mean, obviously even beyond just those three? Because I think a lot of creatives get in the weeds with, "How do I balance, different parts of my life without compartmentalizing to the point that I cut off the emotional flow that needs to exist between and among all the things."

### **Rhianna Basore**

Yeah, it's a great question and it's definitely something that I... I wouldn't say struggle with, but that I am continually learning more about.

**Bonnie Gillespie**

Well framed.

**Rhianna Basore**

Thank you. Because for me, it feeds itself. I firmly believe in cross-training, creatively. I have a very active brain, and I get bored of doing the same thing, the same way all the time. And so if I spend the morning writing, in the afternoon shooting self-tape, and the evening doing coaching, that allows me to trigger different parts of my brain, but it's still a creative, joy-based place so I'm vibing in the same way. It's not like you know I'm going to go like to the DMV that day. It's just different aspects of my joy, and in that way, I don't find myself as depleted, because I am cross inspiring myself, and...

**Bonnie Gillespie**

I love that. Sorry, I'm like running a highlighter over that in my in my brain. That is so good.

**Rhianna Basore**

And it's how I keep waking up every day inspired. Fresh project, fresh idea and that in itself has attracted so many people with that same energy, who are looking to really create a lot of dynamic businesses in their life. And I have built an amazing circle of support that also helps quite a bit. They always are like, "Remember to rest. You have so many projects, remember to take a break." And I'm like, "But it feels so great," but I'm also finding that as activity is joyful, rest is the other half of the coin. And so, I am maturing into an understanding that rest is not something I have to do; it is actually part of my creativity. It's my inhale for the exhale of my efforts.

**Bonnie Gillespie**

If we look at just states of flow, recovery is a part of the flow state. And that is that rest that gets put in so that we're able to go into those peak states of accessing parts of our brain that don't get to come online if we never rest. Because they can't, we can't access those parts of our brain if we don't give the balance of true time off from problem-solving.

**Rhianna Basore**

I had been obsessed with my morning rituals since I started doing them seven years ago. They've gotten a little lengthy they're hours long now, not needed, but I love them so much. And they really create a foundation for me of depth and stillness that then when I go into hyperdrive later in my day, I can tap back into. And I think it's the same thing as well it's like you take that little nap, you have that little lunch, you do that little like, "Oh, what's that funny YouTube video," and all of these ways, they become colors that you can dip your paintbrush in and put a little dab in whatever you're working on.

## **Bonnie Gillespie**

I love that you're taking us in that direction because I think that we, we choose these creative careers because we want to always be creating and dabbing that that paintbrush into different colors and, and, having just that expansive palette of, we can go anywhere with this like there's just the canvas is everywhere and everything and we can go everywhere with it. Yet we put ourselves in situations where we want almost structure and patriarchal systems in place as we manage our creative careers and we get really tight around something that is meant to be just so expressive and full and creative. Could you speak a little bit about how creativity almost becomes a bad word even for creatives in a corporate structure and, and what that kind of connection is and how we can navigate that?

## **Rhianna Basore**

Yeah, absolutely. I was thinking of an example that happened to me in the early COVID period which is I had my piece that I directed. It had been an award-winning show, doing the Fringe Festival last summer, it was very exciting. And then it was invited to perform in Iceland, which was a huge gift. I couldn't wait. I was so excited to have the first thing I ever directed be in Iceland. And then we were uninvited from the country of Iceland, as Americans. And we were invited to do it on Zoom. I haven't yet found a Zoom play I really feel like works. And one day I woke up and I said, "No, it's meant to be a movie."

And so over three weekends we shot the one-man show in a closet in my actor's house. We edited it together. It was seen by thousands of people around the world. It debuted in Reykjavik. It was better critically acclaimed than the play. And in that way, I think I finally realized the leap of faith that is creativity. Did I know how to direct the movie? No. Did I do it anyway? Yes. Did it work out? Oh, it did. And so, to not need to see a SWOT analysis... for those of you who have a business background, you don't need a SWOT analysis. You need to tap into that feeling of "I'm interested... I know... I think... I'm intrigued by..." and chase that curiosity. Chase that little bit of wonder and in that way lies the gold, every time. And it becomes bigger and more wondrous than you thought at the beginning, but that's part of the magic. And to trust the unfolding and not need to have it be fully arrived at the beginning.

I'm always shocked when I look out at the business world, which I love, and there's so much amazing work done there but so much of it is derivative. It is copying what's worked for other people, and that's because they want a clear path of success. I get it, but as an artist, I don't want to do that. I want to do something that represents me, my experience, and what I see in the world. So how can these two things be together? Well, you take the structures of business that allow safety and longevity and keeping the money source fluid and functioning for a long time, and then you make it your own. And that's why I truly believe creatives have so much to give business is because it is in this hybrid that the innovation and the new ideas that business is hungry for will turn into money-making ideas for creatives.

### **Bonnie Gillespie**

Love, love, love. I remember at the beginning of pandemic times or quarantinetimes for the pandemic times, going into these Zooms that were happening with people in the Television Academy, exec producers, showrunners, just creatives, that were gathering in the very earliest days to have conversations around "What does the entertainment industry look like now." Knowing it's changing minute to minute and this was very early on, just so many like hypotheticals of "What are we going to be doing with our creative space?" And what I loved about every single one of those conversations is it was always, "How can we be creative enough to find a way to do what we already know works, but in a completely different way?" And I thought, we're going to inform the rest of the world on how to start thinking creatively in problem-solving, rather than, "Well we just do the done thing." It's like, we can't do the done thing right now. We don't have that option.

### **Rhianna Basore**

And that's true in all levels of our society. My grandmother used to always say to me, she's like, "When are you going to get a job with benefits and stay in it for the rest of your life?" And I was like, "Grandma, those don't exist anymore." Like the structures in our society are breaking down and that's better and for worse. And we get to build what's coming next. And we have these beautiful creative brains that can see castles where there's only sand. So, let's shore up those walls and make it really beautiful.

### **Bonnie Gillespie**

So, share with me what your vision is for creating the Hollywood we want. Where do you see us going as storytellers? And I'm not even gonna tell you how far in the future to flash but just with that idea of, we're gonna make some creative solutions out of these problems. Where do you see us headed?

### **Rhianna Basore**

I definitely see diversity in leadership. Diversity in storytelling. I want so badly to hear new kinds of stories. I am an obsessive book reader, as you know, and I consume everything I can get my hands on and watch...

### **Bonnie Gillespie**

Y'all seriously. She's, she's reading a book like while we're doing this interview, she never stops...

### **Rhianna Basore**

It's true. I have my Kindle on behind the screen.

### **Bonnie Gillespie**

You think he's listening. She's... not, she's reading, she's both, it's everything.



**Rhianna Basore**

I have read everything I've gotten my hands on since I was a kid, and I love all those stories but we've seen the hero's journey. So, what else is there and what other voices are there and what other experiences are there? There are different kinds of storytelling, all over the globe, different experiences in every human being. And I'm excited in the creating the Hollywood we want to get those stories told. Because I as a storyteller am interested in connecting humanity through shared experiences. And if we are leaving out storytellers and stories then we are not sharing the human experience. And so, I see a Hollywood that allows all the voices at the table that would like to be there and speak and share their stories and collaborate because that sounds fascinating and I want to hear all those stories.

**Bonnie Gillespie**

Heck, yeah. Oh, that's beautiful. Rhianna, please let everybody know where they can follow you, follow up with you, connect with you, learn what you're reading next... all the places.

**Rhianna Basore**

Absolutely. So, the best place to follow me is at my website Self Trust Fund. It's self-trust because I believe we have to build the trust in ourselves as financial well-being providers in order to build the trust fund that will fund our best life, so SelfTrustFund.com. You can also follow me on Instagram. I do videos Monday and Friday. Mondays are on money monsters and Fridays are my money tips for creatives.

**Bonnie Gillespie**

Beautiful. Rhianna, thank you so much for sharing this space with me. It's just wonderful to get to spend this time with you.

**Rhianna Basore**

It was my pleasure. Thanks for having me.