

Matt (host): Welcome back to Nimble Youth, the podcast where we explore the emotional lives of children and teens and help parents better understand the challenges and opportunities facing young people today. I'm your host, Matt Buttermann. Adolescence and young adulthood can be exciting seasons of life, but they can also feel overwhelming. Many teens today are navigating anxiety, uncertainty, academic pressure, social comparison, questions about identity, and fears about the future, all while trying to figure out who they are and where they belong. And sometimes what young people need most is not just advice, but guidance, encouragement, accountability, and someone who believes in their potential.

My guest today is Coach Keisha, a life coach and mentor who works with teens and young adults to help them build confidence, clarify goals, strengthen emotional resilience, and move toward purposeful living. Through her coaching and mentorship work, Keisha focuses on helping young people recognize their value, develop practical life skills and overcome the obstacles that may be holding them back. Coach Keisha, welcome to Nimble Youth.

Coach Keisha: Thank you for having me Nimble Youth and thank you for having me, Matt. It is a pleasure to be here.

Matt (host): Absolutely. So many teens and young adults today described feeling stuck emotionally, socially, or directionally. And from your perspective, why are so many young people struggling with confidence and purpose right now?

Coach Keisha: Doctor. Have to do with competition and comparison. A lot of the young people are comparing themselves and they are in competition with other people, their other peers, and which is the number one thievery to confidence and purpose. It robs them of their confidence because they really cannot see themselves authentically for who they are. And they really cannot walk in their true purpose and their true identity because they're trying to mimic what they're seeing, or they're trying to live up to those standards.

So that has a huge impact on their confidence. It has a huge impact on how they see themselves and what, you know, what they would like to accomplish as far as like purpose and goals. That also, you know, socially, because they're looking at social media, right. And they're like, this is what I want. And the reality of that is just not, you know, you can't accomplish it overnight.

So you have to take, there are steps that you have to take. There's a measure that you have to accomplish. And I don't think that the reality in that is really being thought through and they're competing with, you know, their peers, particular generation, and it definitely hampers their confidence.

Matt (host): Yeah. Yeah. Know it's with the social media, it's like people post the absolute best versions of themselves. Right? So, you know, you don't see the struggle behind the glamorous photos that they they publish or the stories that they they write down.

And I think that causes a lot of lot of problems for teens today. Right? Yeah, for sure. So we hear the term life coaching a lot, but I think many people may not fully understand what life coaching is or what it means. So how would you explain life coaching, especially for teens and young adults?

Koach Keisha: I explain life coaching as it's not counseling, it's clarity. It's definitely given the youth and young adults, the foundation for the path forward. Giving them like the cheat sheet, giving them insight into what to somewhat expect as they progress and move forward in their responsibilities as an adult and as a young adult, and really understanding that they have a full, they have full range to make healthy decisions for their life. And understanding that it really gives them the confidence that they need in order to make those sound and healthy decisions without that, find themselves in unorthodox practices, gang affiliations, and they also find themselves in illegal behavior because they don't have a clear understanding way, clear vision of what that path forward looks like. Even though, you know, they may not all agree with the way that we do things and how we were raised in our generation, but nevertheless, they're more so show me versus teach me.

Right. And giving them the insight into what it could look like, giving them a preview, a glimpse of what it could look like if you do this versus that, if you perfect more positivity versus negativity, these are the outcomes. So whatever it is that they perfect and focus on is what they will become great at. And that's both, again, negative or positive.

Matt (host): Yeah. And so I guess you could say, you know, we're talking about how coaching is different from therapy. I guess therapy is kind of the teaching part and coaching is, you know, the practical part, right? It's not in the classroom anymore. You're not in the therapy room, but you're out holding their hand and getting them through it, right?

Koach Keisha: Yes, definitely. Coaching is clarity. Yeah. Right? It's actually connected the individual with what they already know, but just confirmation, right?

Giving them the guidance on how to carry that out in a more wiser way with different perspectives, with a, you know, a deeper understanding and so that they can know, you know, what it is that they need to get done in order to accomplish what it is that they're wanting to accomplish. So coaching is clarity. And I always share that with my youth and young adults, you know, you better than anybody else knows you. You're with you twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, three sixty five days of the year. I can't tell you about you.

You have to tell me about you, but as a coach, it is for me to give you clarity to, you know, shine light from a different perspective that you're not just close minded and that you have, you know, the information that you, that you need in order to make a healthy decision.

Matt (host): Yeah, for sure. So we talked a little bit earlier about how confidence is something that many young people struggle with today. And then of course the role of social media and

constant comparison causes that erosion of confidence, but what are, what are some of the other confidence barriers you might see in teens today?

Koach Keisha: I also see motivation as a confidence barrier, right? And a lot of the kids are not motivated. And the reason why they're not motivated is because everything is not happening instantaneously for them. And because they want everything to happen instantaneously, they have a lack of motivation, which also, you know, filters into a lack of confidence and they don't want to be told what to do. They want to be asked or requested on what to do.

And when those languages aren't practiced on a day to day basis, it really pushes them into a place of isolation. Understand that that guess what we could always do some things in this world alone, but isolation is a different category and not having the motivation from day to day definitely will impact your confidence. And they need that. If it's nothing but peer to peer motivation, if it's nothing from, you know, a mentor to motivate them, they need that daily motivation that keeps them thriving and keeps them confident about what it is that they're seeking out to accomplish.

Matt (host): Yeah. And so as a coach, how do you help young people begin rebuilding their confidence when they've experienced this failure, rejection, or this constant sort of self doubt? What are some of the ways you might help them rebuild their confidence?

Koach Keisha: The one way I always go about helping the youth and young adults to rebuild their confidence is first of all, who you are and understanding that you are fearfully and uniquely made and that there's only one of you and really understanding between the identity versus identification and understanding you authentically. So once you understand what makes you as the youth and young adult, what makes you thrive? Then we move forward with that understanding who you are, what it is that you want, what it is that you need, what it is that you like, what it is that you don't like. You have to be able to understand who you are in order to get what you need from the universe. And in order to be able to do that, you have to be able to articulate and express that as you know, as clear and as concise as you possibly can.

That's one of the ways I really, really tap into the young adults is really understanding and getting them to understand who are you so that when people ask you, who are you? You have that at the tip of your tongue and they're not fumbling for that so that people know how to engage them. They know their boundaries. They know what they like and what they don't like, and that way they can be approached in that manner. So that's one of the ways I started with the youth and young adults is really getting them to understand their identity and know it and connecting with who they really are authentically.

Matt (host): Right, right. Well, leads nicely into what I want to talk about next, which is, which is purpose and identity. You know, know I think a lot of people, young people today, they feel pressure to have their lives, you know, all figured out and we talked about this sort of instant gratification that, you know, drives them, but they want to have, you know, everything figured out, what they want to do and who they want to become and and where they're headed. So so

how can teens begin to explore their purpose, their identity without feeling crushed by these expectations? A lot of which are self imposed, right?

Koach Keisha: Absolutely. And one of the things that I share with the youth and young adults is when you begin to put expectations on anything, is, is a high disappointment. Right. And that, you know, when I grew up, their promises us comfort, full of food. Only thing happens is when you make it happen.

So one of the ways that I really will support them is tuning out the social oppression, tuning out the social anxiety, really disconnecting from that world, right? Understanding that there is a world, but you don't have to meet those expectations and that you are who you are. And you need to thrive in that lane and be the best version of yourself that you possibly can be. And knowing that that is enough, knowing that that is enough and that there's always room for improvement. And you know, when we start to having the mindset of perfection, perfection is only in the mind.

It's not realistic and to really, really separate, you know, the mental from the physical. And I think that that is one of the ways that they get developed. Understanding that everything is a mindset shift, but it also requires action. It also requires, you know, your daily participation. So understanding, you know, that you are unique, There's only one of you really tuning out the social oppression and really connecting with who you are and really knowing that where you are in this specific moment and season in your life, it is enough.

And if there needs to be some improvement, then do it.

Matt (host): Right. Yeah, think it's great advice and, and you know, things don't happen for everybody on the same schedule. Right. You know, a lot of us make wrong turns in life and just because the train gets derailed there for a moment doesn't mean you can't put it back on the tracks, right? You know?

Koach Keisha: That's right.

Matt (host): Yeah. So one of the things that, that one of the things that coaching often emphasizes is accountability. So let's talk a little bit about what accountability is and why is accountability so important for growth these days?

Koach Keisha: Think that accountability is really ownership, you know, is taken into consideration the condition of being responsible. I think it is reporting to oneself and really organizing your life in a way that you can definitely be responsible for who you are. And it is highly important because it really, really allows you again, to connect with who you are, know your identity and know that guess what, you're not perfect and you will make some mistakes along the way. When you make those mistakes that you get to realize that guess what, it was a mistake and I get to grow from it. Right?

Accountability is not a prison. It's not a death sentence. It is ownership. It is really, really understanding that there is some level of responsibility in this life. As long as we live this life, we're going to always make mistakes, but growing from those mistakes, unlearning the behaviors that no longer serve the individual in this season and learning new things that are working for you.

You know, it's just like a computer every now and then you have to do an update to it every day, every now and then you have to deprogram and then reprogram some new software. So I really want the youth and young adults to really understand that life is about learning and we have to unlearn, learn, and then relearn some things as well. And it will only, it'll only get better the more and more you stay connected with yourself and taking accountability and ownership, right? And also understanding that you're only in control of yourself. So take accountability for yourself.

You cannot take accountability for anybody else, nor are you in control of anybody else, but as long as you can maintain who you are and be self aware about that, I think that accountability will always show up in the favor of the individual.

Matt (host): Yeah, for sure, for sure. And I know those of us who have raised teens are in the process of raising them right now, we know that sometimes they need someone outside of their immediate family who can encourage them, but also challenge them. Certainly, if you're, if that, as a parent, you say one thing, you know, a coach can say probably much the same thing, like almost exactly the same thing, but they'll listen to them, Where they won't listen to the parents. So yeah, that definitely is, you know, highlights your role, I think for sure. So many teens today, they struggle with the fear, fear of failure.

And Yes. How do you help young people develop resilience when life doesn't go according to plan? Because we all know it doesn't always go according to plan and sometimes it seems like it almost never goes according to plan. So how do you, how do you help them struggle with that fear of failing?

Koach Keisha: I always just let them know the, regardless of what the outcome is to keep going, right. And that you're going to bump into some hurdles. You're going to bump into some barriers. You're going to have some things where you're not in control of and life will happen, right? As long as we live this life, we're going to have some obstacles.

We're going to have some tribulations is inevitable. So understanding that I think best prepares them for when it does come. And that's another thing that I really, really appreciate about life coaching, because it helps them to navigate those obstacles and understanding that when they do come, that guess what you get to realize, oops, I made a mistake and I get to keep going. It didn't work out according to the way that I thought it was going to work out, but I get to continue to go on and keep doing things on whatever's their target. So it's very important that they navigate failure, not as the end all be all, but as a lesson to be learned that that didn't work.

Let's try something else. It's never to give up. It's never to give in. It's never to throw in the towel. It's just figuring out what else that needs to be done in order to accomplish the goal, because maybe that path that they desire to take wasn't the right path.

Maybe it's not the right season. Maybe it's not the right timing because everything happens, you know, when it's supposed to happen and really understand that that failure is inevitable. We've all experienced failure, but you really have to look at it as a lesson learned and not as the end all be all.

Matt (host): Right. Right. For sure. So let's talk a little bit about communication as any of us who have been in relationships know you know, a marriage or otherwise communication is essential. It's what determines I think a healthy relationship.

So why is communication so important for teens and young adults to develop early?

Koach Keisha: I highly think that communication is very important that they develop it early because it is a language that needs to be expressed. And again, if they do not have effective communication, how will we be able to know what it is that they need? How would they be able to know what it is that they need if they aren't able to articulate that or express that and do know that everybody communicates differently, but there's always a safe space to do it as best as one can, but at least get it out. And if you cannot get it out verbally, try to write it down, try to journal it, right? Because some people can express themselves more in written than they can orally.

So with all being stated, whatever it is, do what works, do whatever communication best that works for the individual so that you do not have those feelings, emotions bottled up, and then it turns into anger, and then it turns into unresolved issues. So learning what communication path works best for the youth and young adults is always what I encourage them to do. But however, I always reiterate to them, never go into isolation. It's okay to walk this journey alone if you have to, but do know that you're not lonely, right. And do not fall into the path of isolation because that creates another monster.

Matt (host): Exactly. Yeah.

Koach Keisha: So getting out as best as you know how sometimes you have to scream, sometimes you have to yell, whatever that looks like, but make sure that you do not bottle up those feelings and you do not mute yourself.

Matt (host): Exactly, exactly. Yeah, that's great advice. So for our parents listening, talk about on this podcast, we talk a lot about sort of the balance you have to strike as a parent because you don't want to be overly controlling or critical, but you want to be supportive at the same time. So, what are some of the ways that you can think of that would that ways parents can better help support their teens who are struggling with things like motivation and direction?

Koach Keisha: I think that one of the ways that the parents could definitely support their teen or their young adult is resonating with where the youth and young adult is. I really, you know, don't create judgment. Make it a, you know, a judgment free zone, make it a safe space because you think young adults want to know that you can resonate with them versus what we've been through. They don't want to hear what we've been through, you know, because it's a different day and age. It's a different generation.

We're working with new technology or better technology in a sense. Right. So they really want to know that you understand where they're coming from and that you're not trying to take them down memory lane, that you're not trying to get them to do what you want them to do the way that you want them to do it as a parent, and really understand that they have a voice, that they also have a, they also have perspectives and how they would like their lives to go and really included their voice in that don't silence their voice just because they don't have enough experience. They have experienced according to their age and whatever that looks like, we have to honor that. We have to respect that.

And then we have to give them some additional perspectives and allow them to make the decision for their life. So really try to create a judgment free zone for them, allow them to be who they are authentically without judging it and without shoving the way that we were raised down their throat, to get them to better understand or to resonate what it is that we're trying to get them to do for the betterment of, you know, for ourselves. So that's one of the ways I would support the parent with, you know, you know, speaking with or communicating with their young adult.

Matt (host): Right. For sure. So let's talk a little bit about mentorship and those of us who are in careers have often had someone along the way who has mentored us or served as an example for how to act and how to navigate some situations that are fraught with anxiety and you question your, your competence. You know, you have imposter syndrome, that sort of thing, but a mentor can really help you through that. And it's also a major theme in your work with young people as well.

So how can positive mentors really change the trajectory of a young person's life?

Koach Keisha: I think that one of the ways that the mentor gets to impact the mentee is making sure that they exercise empathy, really understanding that when they were that age, what did they need? And really understanding that they had somebody to go to, transformation or impact that that would have had on their lives. So really opening up the door of empathy as a mentor, and it's not do as you told, it's do as you're supported, right? And as you support the mentee, I think that they will become more open and more available and honest to have that relationship where they feel like you are a safe space for them. And really, again, they're about show me versus tell me.

So you have to be the example, you have to be living it, that they can look up to because they like honesty, they like people that are trustworthy, they like people that's going to tell the truth,

and if you're not living up to what it is that you're trying to get them to do, you're not going to have that impact on them the way that you think that you should, because they'll be the first to call you out and say, were you not doing it?

Matt (host): Exactly, exactly.

Koach Keisha: You're learning according to the way that they're looking and not the way that they're listening.

Matt (host): Right, exactly.

Koach Keisha: And it's very important that you be what it is that you say you are that builds that trust factor for them, that they also know that, guess what, you're trustworthy, I trust you, I can look up to you, and I can come to you in the time of need. And as a mentor, it is very, very important that we display those behaviors.

Matt (host): Yeah, absolutely. Agree 100% with that. I think teenagers have a unique ability to sort of sniff out, you know, inauthenticity, right? You know, someone who's faking it. So yeah, be, be yourself, but, but be honest for sure.

So for, for young people, if a teenager or young child is, an adult is listening today, maybe someone who feels lost, they're discouraged, they're unsure about their future. What's one thing you might want them to hear?

Koach Keisha: One thing I want them to know in here is that you still have a whole lot of life ahead of you and don't give up right now. You don't know what tomorrow may bring. You don't know what the week after may bring and keep a positive attitude, regardless of what the situation is. Always look at what you can learn from a situation versus what's causing you the pain because pain is temporary, right? And once you realize that pain is temporary, you will actually become a better version of who you are because you are made and created to go through some pain.

I think that there's a song that says joy and pain, and understanding that you can have joy and pain at the same time, and they can coexist and you still be okay.

Matt (host): Right.

Koach Keisha: And they really need to understand that we can coexist with good and bad and still be okay, and not allow the chaos to cause them confusion, but allow it to give them clarity that we can still function in chaos and be okay. You okay. At the end of the day, I want them to know that they will be okay. Okay.

Matt (host): Yeah, absolutely. That's great. That's a, that's a great way to look at it. So Keisha, as we wrap up, I think one of the most important reminders from today's conversation is this, is

that young people, they don't have to have everything figured out right now, right here, right now, because growth takes time and confidence takes practice and your purpose in life often emerges gradually, not all at once. I know for me it was, it happened very gradually.

Of course. And sometimes the most transformative thing a young person can hear is you are capable of more than you realize. You know, you may have a goal but you know, it may look like you'll never get there right now at this point with, with all these things that seemingly are against you, but you're capable of it and just, you need to stay the course, right? So before we close, is there one sort of final takeaway you'd like to leave with our listeners?

Koach Keisha: Yes. I would definitely like to let the people know that life is not happening to you. It's happening for you and to remain positive no matter what, and whatever you perfect, good or bad is what will be the outcome. And to always, you know, don't never give up, keep going, keep going and keep going. You know, don't give up on yourself.

Don't give up on your dreams. Don't give up on your goals because as long as you stay consistent with it, it will happen when it's supposed to happen. Believe in yourself, committed to who you are, be your authentic self every single day, no matter what, and do not allow other people to impose what you should and shouldn't be doing when you know it may not align with who you are. Your assignment, complete the assignment and watch for a greater outcome.

Matt (host): Absolutely. Yes. So my guest today has been coach Keisha. She works with teens and young adults to build confidence, resilience, and direction through coaching and mentorship. And you can learn more about her work at Coaching by Keisha, this coaching with a K by Keisha too.

And we'll have that link in our show notes and you're, you're based in Maryland, but you work with, with people nationwide, maybe worldwide. Is that right?

Koach Keisha: That is correct.

Matt (host): Great. Excellent. And if today's episode resonated with you, please do share it with a friend and don't forget to rate and review Nimble Youth on Apple Podcasts and Spotify, because your support helps us to continue these important conversations around youth mental health and personal growth. Until next time, remember, young people don't need perfection. They need support, encouragement, and people willing to believe in them.

I'm Matt Buttermann. This is Nimble Youth. We'll see you next time.