

Ep #1: Welcome to the Beyond Applause Podcast



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Michelle Barry Franco

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Welcome to *Beyond Applause*, a podcast for mission-driven leaders, coaches, and creatives who are ready to share their expertise and stories through public speaking. Here's your host, Michelle Barry Franco.

Hello my speaker friends, welcome to the *Beyond Applause* podcast. I am so excited to be finally sharing this podcast with you. This has been a long time coming, and I just have so many stories and resources and so much inspiration and strategy that I want to share with you. We've got interviews lined up that I know are just going to light you up and serve you and your message and your business in powerful ways.

So I just wanted to introduce you to the *Beyond Applause* podcast, tell you a little bit about what to expect in the weeks and episodes to come, and tell you also a little bit about how the podcast got started by way of my own path to thought leadership. I'm hoping you'll find some little resonance and moments of connection in there. I suspect you will.

So first of all though, let's talk about what do I mean by beyond applause because after all, isn't applause awesome? Like, isn't this what we're looking for? And of course it is. Applause is amazing. But great speaking, the kind of speaking that makes a difference in other people's lives, the kind of speaking that changes your business in a way that allows you to make an even bigger impact in the world is about so much more than great speaking.

It's about impact and difference. It's about crafting your message and your experience, your lessons learned and your expertise into talks and publications. You know, all the different ways that you can serve through your thought leadership. So when I say beyond applause, I'm really thinking about what do we do beyond just sort of like, the essentials of crafting messages and talks and thought leadership in a way that makes other people, you know, stand up and clap, and actually changes people's lives, and inspires them to positive action. That's what we're going to talk about on this podcast.

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I mean, of course you want to be awesome. And I want to be awesome too, and really, that is actually one of the fundamental ways that we serve as great speakers and leaders in our industry. But there's a certain kind of awesome that's way less about us and a lot more about the people that we serve, and that's really what we're talking about here at the *Beyond Applause* podcast.

So I thought maybe I'd tell you a little bit about my own story and how I started down the path of thought leadership and focusing on beyond applause. And I'm thinking maybe you'll find some little moments of resonance in here around your own mission driven leadership and speaking.

So when I started my business in 2008, I had clarity on only one thing. And that was that my mission in life is to help others say what they're trying to say more powerfully. So at the time I was in a Masters degree program, I was getting my second Masters degree. I already had a Masters degree in Speech Communication Studies, I'd actually been teaching public speaking and different communication courses at the college-level for - I think it was like, eight years at the time.

But I was getting this second Masters degree and I had a couple of wonderful, beautiful friends in the program, and we met every Saturday morning at this little café. And I remember this particular Saturday morning we were sitting there, the sun was streaming in the window, it was so comfortable and lovely, and in the middle of our conversation I had this sudden realization.

It was like a voice in my head that said, "You don't need this degree. You're just scared." And this was totally unexpected because I hadn't been considering quitting the program, I was actually really loving a lot of what I was learning in the program. But it was - you know those moments where you just - you know, an insight comes and it resonates so powerfully and strongly that I just couldn't let it go. It wouldn't go away.

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And within a week of having that thought pop in my mind unexpectedly, I had put my degree on hold and then eventually I actually officially left the program, but I had put my degree process on hold and was creating brochures and a website within the next few weeks after that to hang my shingle as a communication consultant.

I mean, I really had no idea even what a communication consultant was, but again, all I knew was that I am on this earth to help people say what they're trying to say more powerfully. And I had this deep - I had a very deep clarity about that then, I still have that same deep clarity. But as you may know, as a mission driven leader, our sort of major insights don't always translate into the clearest actionable next steps or even the most powerful and successful strategy.

So I really did spend the next five years or so, I mean, just going in every direction around what actually was my message and who was I going to serve with that message. And maybe this isn't the message, but this is the message. And I would try on - I had probably 10 taglines, probably within the first five, seven years of my business.

I had many websites, I don't even know, eight, I don't want to count. But I was just everywhere. What I wasn't going to be, by the way, was a speaking coach. Just to be clear. What I knew was that I didn't want to be a speaking coach. There's a whole other story around that and around all these perceptions I had about what it meant to be a speaking coach, but really what I've learned since then is that it is incredible what kinds of things block us from stepping into our rightful path as leaders, and you know, as thought leaders in our areas of expertise.

So I definitely have a pretty intense story around all of that and I tell you that not because I think my story is any, you know, more difficult or less difficult than anyone else's, more just to say if you're struggling with any of that too, you are so not alone. I mean, pretty much all of my clients, one of the reasons that - one of the main reasons they come to me is because they're struggling with those same things.

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We know what we want to say in a general way. We even have powerful conviction around that. But how do we turn that into a message, a talk, a book, an article, all the other things that make up our thought leadership that changes people's lives, that actually has that kind of influence and causes that kind of motivation and activation?

And that's really what I have spent the last five years, once I was willing to call myself a speaking coach, studying even more intensely. I already knew how to craft a great talk, I was already teaching college level public speaking. What I didn't know was how to take these messages and turn them into something that both changes people's lives but also attracts the right people to us so that we can serve them even further through our organization, you know, even through our non-profit organization, through our for-profit coaching business or consulting business or any other kind of business.

So I started the *Beyond Applause* podcast because it was very clear to me, you know, right pretty much after I went through my first five years of rollercoaster, that there are so many of us out there struggling with how to turn these messages that we care so much about into talks primarily right, because I'm a speaking coach, so that's where a lot of my focus is. But really into talks at the core but, of course, there's also books and articles and you know, blog posts and videos and webinars, all these other ways that we share our expertise in a way that changes people's lives and attracts some clients to us.

So that's what the *Beyond Applause* podcast is about. I cannot wait to share with you the stories and the inspiration to bring on some of the experts that I have worked with, consulted with, and counted on, to help me get to where I am and that I've watched my clients also take advantage of to make their biggest difference in the world.

So I am so excited to share all of this with you. You'll see a new episode of the *Beyond Applause* podcast every week come through. I'd love to hear what you think of it, share with me what kind of resources and strategies

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and stories you're looking for so that I can make sure that this podcast serves you powerfully and meaningfully because that's always my goal.

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Thanks for listening to this episode of *Beyond Applause*. If you like what was offered in today's show and want more, head on over to michellebarryfranc.com/start to get your free complete guide to stepping into leadership speaking right away.