

Mind, Body, Spirit. Empower Your Business with Mental Wellness



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Announcer:

Welcome to THRIVE, a Paychex business podcast where you'll hear timely insights to help you navigate marketplace dynamics and propel your business forward. Here's your host, Gene Marks.

Gene Marks:

Hey, everyone. And welcome back to another episode of THRIVE. My name is Gene Marks. Thank you very much for joining me. I've got a great guest right alongside me here, Bershan Shaw. You might have seen her on the Real Housewives of New York City, but Bershan, first of all, thank you very much for joining me.

Bershan Shaw:

Hello. Thank you. Thank you for having me. I'm so excited.

Gene Marks:

I'm glad that you're here. So right. Let's start with URAWARRIOR. Okay. Tell us about this app, what it is.

Bershan Shaw:

Oh, I got to tell you URAWARRIOR, it's a mental wellness app and it launches in May. So please go sign up now. You'll get some goodies. Because it's so important, right? If your mental health is not on point and not together, you can't thrive as a business owner, as an employee, as an entrepreneur. You have to have your mental health in order, right? And so right now in 2022, people are burnt out. They feel overworked. They feel underpaid. Everyone's stressed, we're in a pandemic, we're coming out of it, but it's just a lot of craziness. I mean, suicide is up, opioid addiction is up, medication is up, mental health centers are up, and it's really sad because we need the help. And this is a way to help you get by. Giving you the tools to help you on the daily.

Gene Marks:

So what kind of tools?

Bershan Shaw:

Hmm. I love that. So I've come up with a method called the URAWARRIOR method and everything I do is evidence-based and something that I have been proving for over 12 years, right? As I'm a stage four breast

cancer thriver, as you said. I started this method in the chemo room, helping people with life-altering issues. But then I started and help people with addictions and drugs and alcohol, and then stress and being burnt out, and mental health. So it's the four pillars. When we focus on personal development, self-improvement, motivation, and support, you get better and you do better. Right?

Gene Marks:

Right.

Bershan Shaw:

What I've realized, Gene, is that we don't focus on these things. We run, run, run. We're burnt out and we don't focus on us. Like your personal development — are you growing? Are you learning about yourself? Self-improvement, are you improving yourself? Are you learning new habits? Are you meditating, dealing with stress, affirmations, motivation? Are you motivated to do better and be better? We're stuck, because we procrastinate, because we don't do anything different. And support, do you have a support group to uplift you to be better?

Gene Marks:

You know it's funny that you're introducing this platform at this time, Bershan. I mean, the mental health awareness has been such a hot issue, and maybe it's Simone Biles or Naomi Osaka or Ben Simmons. I'm from Philadelphia so I don't want to talk about that, but there are, there's a lot of celebrity situations of mental health issues that has brought a lot awareness to the issue. And I'm finding that a lot of younger people, they don't consider it to be the kind of stigma that it might have been when I was younger, you know? So talk to me a little bit about that. How important is mental health for a business owner running their business, for their employees? What is your platform doing to really make sure that they're tiptop?

Bershan Shaw:

Well, I got to tell you, I think you're absolutely right. For the youth and the younger generation, I'm glad that they are into it and want to learn, and they can raise their hand and say, "I need help", which is so important. But I always say with business owners, sometimes we don't look at our staff or employees or people we're working with, because we just want to hit the bottom line or we work, work, work. But people are dealing with stuff. And then when you see someone spiral out of control or you see something happening, you don't know how to deal with it. So I say, my app, URAWARRIOR will give tools on a daily. So we have a seven-day tool, a 21-day tool, a 90-day and a 120-day and a 365. So you join it and you use it any way possible.

Bershan Shaw:

It is a known fact in 21 days, it takes 21 days to make a habit. Then it takes 90 days to make a habit a lifestyle. And so in order to be better, we have to change our mindset and start making habits into lifestyle so we can be better. So if you come in, wouldn't you be happier if your employer, if your employee, was happier, right? They didn't feel stressed. They weren't burnt out. They weren't overworked and they didn't feel tired. Like, "Oh God, what am I doing? No one acknowledges me. No one ..." It's because they feel stressed across the board, at home, at work, and they don't have a release. We're giving them a release.

Gene Marks:

Got it. So what kind of resources are on this platform? You had mentioned coaches.

Bershan Shaw:

Yeah.

Gene Marks:

What kind of people am I dealing with?

Bershan Shaw:

Oh, good. So it will be coaches, we'll have therapists, we'll have celebs, we'll have people sharing their warrior stories. Because what we do know is that when you share your story, it helps someone else. And then if they share a story, it helps someone else. So it's all about removing the stigma.

Gene Marks:

Bershan, do you see this as a platform that ... I have 10 employees in my company. Is this something that I could subscribe to for my business, and then make it available to my individual employees?

Bershan Shaw:

Yeah. So just so you know, we have two hospitals that we partnered with already, that has thousands of employees, doctors, nurses, patients, the community. So please join now, www.URAWarrior.com. It's for businesses. We're doing B2B, starting with, so any small business would want their employees and themselves to be happy and healthy, right? If you're not happy and healthy, how do you lead? But if your employees aren't happy and healthy, how do you get production? How do you get to the right bottom line? Because I'm telling you, I'm a coach, and I go in to see what's going on. And many people are not happy. They're just not.

Gene Marks:

All right. Let's talk about some of the other products and services that you're offering. And then I got to get to you as well, and where this is all coming from, but you offer something called Warrior Training International. What exactly is that?

Bershan Shaw:

So, that's my method. So I do diversity and inclusion training. I do leadership training, management training. So what the "warrior" stemmed out of me getting diagnosed with stage four breast cancer in 2009, but from the chemo room, I went to get my masters from NYU, but I devised a method to help you with your mindset, right. And it's a big take action. So we know if you take action, 20 times 20 X, that you will succeed. The thing is that most people don't take action. And most people live in fear, which is False Evidence Appearing Real. If you strip the fear, which is 99% of the people, and you strip the procrastination, which is 99% of the people, then we can start. We begin the process. So I take you on a process of learning a journey about yourself. And when you learn about yourself, then you could be anything, and do anything you want.

Gene Marks:

And is Warrior Training International, is this a service that you're only offering? Or do you have a team of people that would work with me if I –

Bershan Shaw:

No, no, no. So I have a team of people. I have a team of coaches that work with me. Yes. So it's my method, but I have a team of coaches and we go to small business, big businesses all over the world.

Gene Marks:

Got it. And this is, it's not just for businesses, but I guess it's individuals as well. And regardless of gender or, race, color or creed, correct?

Bershan Shaw:

Yep. Of course. Of course. Yes.

Gene Marks:

All right. Then you have a bestselling book called "Unstoppable Warrior." Tell us about that.

Bershan Shaw:

Oh yeah. So "The Unstoppable Warrior Woman," it's always been a passion project of mine. I always wanted to do it because as women, we don't really have our voice or our stories told. Right. So a lot of times we hide, we're embarrassed and there's no need to be embarrassed because you're not alone.

Gene Marks:

Right.

Bershan Shaw:

I always say, when you tell your story, it's not for you, it's for someone else. So I wanted to do this book where women can be heard and tell their story. That's why I call it woman. W-O-M-A-N. Not women, right? Because we're all individuals and we all have a story to tell. And now it's our time to tell it. Don't be afraid.

Gene Marks:

Bershan, where does this all come from? Your whole story is that you survived stage four breast cancer. But for somebody like yourself, you did not just get this energy. This just did not just happen overnight. What were you doing even before you got sick with breast cancer, and how did you get to this point in your life?

Bershan Shaw:

I know. It's so funny. So my friend was like, "It's like you're in overdrive, Bershan. It's like cancer took you and catapult you to like a stage 50."

Gene Marks:

It's like it triggered something in you.

Bershan Shaw:

I know, it's like it triggered something. You know, before this, I would, I own restaurants in New York City. So I owned a restaurant, but it wasn't my passion. You know what, let me tell you Gene, when you find your passion — that's why I coach leaders. That's why I coach small business owners. Find your passion. You will take off. You see speaking and motivating people, it's my passion. It's my love to help. So I can do it for nothing. I can do it for big money. I love — this app is my passion. So when you are here to serve Gene, when you were told you were going to die and you looked on a screen and saw cancer all over your body and your body lit up, you knew you better get busy living or get busy dying. So I think I found my passion, and that, it woke something up in me. It woke the beast up.

Gene Marks:

When you get sick with cancer, were you still running your restaurants, or were you doing anything else?

Bershan Shaw:

So good point. I was in New York City. I was acting, I was writing, but mainly running my restaurant. But when you get sick with cancer, you have to stop, reflect, reassess, and reboot, and say, "Is this the life I want to live?"

Gene Marks:

Sure, sure.

Bershan Shaw:

Because cancer ...

Gene Marks:

How long ago was this when you were diagnosed with breast cancer?

Bershan Shaw:

So I got diagnosed the first time, 2007. The second time, 2009. And I was told it was terminal.

Gene Marks:

And so you're told that it's terminal — and I ask these questions because it's a motivational issue — how do you handle that news, and the fact that it wasn't terminal? Why wasn't it, in the sense that, was this just a bad diagnosis? Was this something that you did in your mindset and your attitude that you felt that really made a big difference to overcome something like this?

Bershan Shaw:

You know, it's a good point. I always say, "Get busy living or get busy dying." Right. So I think, I always say cancer was my *diagnosis*, not my *prognosis*. When you get cancer, it's a wake-up call. I think it's a wake-up call to say, "Knock, knock, all right. Are you living your best life? Are you stuck?" Like what is the cancer that's holding you back? I literally had to say, "What's my cancer? Why did I get this? Is it, I'm being too overly protective or I'm serving other people and not taking care of myself?" And I realized, I never took care of myself. I did something for everyone else, and not myself. Now I'm living on purpose and living for myself. I want to be happy. And when I'm happy, then my businesses thrive, and they all are.

Gene Marks:

Yeah. So Bershan, you've got a bunch of businesses that you're running right now. You've got the book, you've got the training program, obviously you've got the URAWARRIOR platform as well.

Bershan Shaw:

Got the Shaw and Shaw Design, interior design.[Laughter.]

Gene Marks:

Tell us about your design firm as well.

Bershan Shaw:

Oh yeah. So remember my whole thing is "You are a warrior." It's all about mind, body, spirit, and home. It's a lifestyle. Being a warrior is not just one thing, it's about ... when you have a clear mind, you're healthy. Body, if you eat well, you exercise, you're healthy, right? Spirit, you have to connect to something — whether it's God, the universe, something positive — you're healthy. And when you have a decluttered home, you're healthy. A decluttered home is a decluttered mind. So all goes together.

Gene Marks:

How do you keep it all balanced, Bershan? I mean, with all the different ventures that you've got going on right now. I mean, what's a typical day for you?

Bershan Shaw:

Oh gosh, I wake up. No but I always start on purpose. So when I wake up, I do my affirmations, my meditations, and I breathe in and out, and I do a walk, or I read something positive. I do that every morning for like 15 minutes. Nonstop. I can be in Washington, DC, in New York City, in LA, Bahamas, or Japan. I will be in my hotel room. I bring my candle. I read something positive. I try to keep my mind decluttered from negativity.

Gene Marks:

And ... keep going! So that's 15 minutes. Now what?

Bershan Shaw:

Okay. Now what? Then the phone calls start. Then I have ... right. Then we go. I mean I have an interior design firm, Shaw and Shaw Design, and it's really taken off. So I'm really proud of that. I have this mental health app. Boy oh boy, if you want to start an app, if you want to be in technology — it's a lot. But I really want to disrupt technology. I want to make a stance for women in technology. We get left behind in technology. We're not on the forefronts. We're not on the boards. We're not being seen or being heard. Why not do it? Follow me, ladies. Get into technology. And so it was always a passion of mine. I was afraid. But during the pandemic, I'm like, "Go for it, Bershan. What do you have to lose? They can only tell you no."

Gene Marks:

Tell me about the people that you're working with, Bershan. I'm curious. You are, you've developed your own app and your own platform. You've written your own book. You're providing the training. You've got a design firm. You've got a background in running restaurants as well. Each one of these are like specialized careers. There are people that devote their entire lives to just doing just that. And yet you're doing a bunch of this stuff, which to me, to me it seems like you surround yourself with some good, talented people. And it seems that you delegate work as well to get stuff done, that's under your supervision. How does that work for you? Give us some advice about delegating work and surrounding yourself with good people.

Bershan Shaw:

I think you have to surround yourself with good people and talented people and smart people. I have really great people. Pamela Sharpe runs my chief of staff, Laurie Muslow chief strategist, Marcel, publicist, and Joey, thank you! You know what I mean? You have to have good people. So each person in my divisions, they execute. They know how to execute and they are very good at executing.

Gene Marks:

That is great. That is great. And how do you keep them motivated? Do you speak to them frequently or do you ...?

Bershan Shaw:

Yeah. Oh God, I got to keep them. They always say I'm a slave driver. I'm really not. You know what it is. I just ... No, what it is, is that I keep them inspired and motivated. So when you are motivated — I put them in the right position so they can win. If they're motivated, then they want to do it. So what I have learned — and I've learned the hard way — you put someone in the wrong position, they won't be motivated. They sink. You put someone in the right position, find out what they like, find out their motivation. They will win and it's not ... See, to me, work — and it's so funny. They're all like "You make work fun." It's interesting, right? Because I want them to grow. I'm not the person who says "Do this, do that." I'm the person that says "Let's grow together. Let's learn together." I may have some faults. I lead from the heart. I think it's a big, big thing. And it's a big mistake to lead by just saying, "Do this, do that." Listen to your employees, talk to them, lead from the heart.

Gene Marks:

You know, it's funny too, you, with all the things that you're dealing and the different ventures that you're running. Don't you find that running your own businesses ... ? You are the one that starts with the ideas and you are the one that says, "Okay, we need to be going after this. We need to have a platform that would provide mental health help for people." Or "We need to have a great book that's out there, that tells the stories of unstoppable, your warrior women," you know? So you are the one with the idea, and then you've got to make sure that you've got a good team around you to help you get it done. Am I right about that?

Bershan Shaw:

That's it. And so, and so for all the people listening, there are two things. You have to have a visionary, right? So I'm the big picture, creative spirit, visionary. Right? So I have ... just like Steve Jobs, you would never have an Apple without Steve Jobs. I'm sorry. He was a big picture. It was revolutionary. This is amazing. But he had a Tim Cook and without a Tim Cook who was organized, put structure, processes together, you can't win. So that's what I have in all of my businesses with the app, the mental health app, right? I have Pamela Sharpe, I have Laurie Muslow. You know what I mean? They help bring things to light. I have Marcel, public relations. I have different people— Jerry, Jean, Liz, things that are operation — like doing things, right? So you have to give everybody a place.

Gene Marks:

Yeah. It's just so important to have that team around you. And I feel the same way in my company as well. I have people that, when problems come up, I know who I'm going to assign that to. Or when I come up with ideas for a new type of project or a new type of product, you just, you can't do it by yourself. You got to have good people that are doing it for you, and you keep in close contact with them. You challenge them. Hopefully you compensate them well, or else they wouldn't be around. But you delegate that work because how else can you grow as an entrepreneur than, than surrounding yourself with good resource to get the work done, right?

Bershan Shaw:

And I think I think you said it best, Gene, you challenge them. People like to be challenged and people like to grow. So the moment you don't grow is the day you die, right? If you think you know everything and you're never learning and growing, I think you die. I think what is the purpose? I'm on purpose, because every day I'm learning. My father was saying, "Oh God, you're doing so much." But I'm like, "Dad, it's thriving." The moment it doesn't work, then I'm not running a business. I'm doing a hobby. And it's okay to do a hobby, but it's not a business, right? So my interior design makes money. Everything is a business and people are on board and they're learning and they're growing. Happy home, happy life, happy career. And so I teach people to have a balanced life. That's what the app is for, because I have these businesses. I want you to be happy. I'm telling you when your mental health and your mental being is doing well, you thrive. You're on fire.

Gene Marks:

Yeah. I swear to God, Bershan, you're extremely inspirational person. And the things that entrepreneurs can learn from you are pretty — they're really significant things. And it really does come from the heart. In the few minutes that we have left, I got to ask you about being a woman entrepreneur, being a black woman entrepreneur. It is, we know that there's more parity among genders and among races, probably more than ever before, but there's still a long way to go, you know? And I'm sure that you come across many women who want to be entrepreneurs, want to be their own boss, at least want to get ahead, even in their jobs. What are some of the things that you have learned? What advice would you tell younger women, regardless of their gender, but even if you want to make it specific to black women that are younger. They're looking out to go out in their own business, or be a success in their life. What are some of the things they should be doing or thinking about at a young age to prepare themselves for success?

Bershan Shaw:

Yeah, that, it's a great question. I think it's a three prong. I think one, you have to believe in yourself, right? Don't look for validation outside of yourself. You have everything you need within you. You were put on this earth to be great. So go be great. Two, don't live in fear. Fear is just False Evidence Appearing Real. I'm telling you. Fear paralyzes us. Fear keeps us stuck. Fear makes us not think we're good enough. Stop living

in fear and do it. See we want to be perfect, but there is no perfection. You will make mistakes. You will fail. But once, when you fall down, if you can look up, you can get up. Just get up. Don't live in that fear. And take action.

Bershan Shaw:

The biggest thing that I've learned through my clients all over the world, and I'm telling you in LA, Chicago, Paris, Switzerland: procrastination. "Well, I'll do it when my kid ..." "I'll do it when I get this money." "I'll do it when ..." "I got to take my money out when ..." "I'll do it when ..." That "when" may never come, and that tomorrow may never come. If you don't do it now, who knows what tomorrow brings? It's just an excuse. Everyone has one.

Gene Marks:

That is great. Bershan, where can people find out more information about you? And obviously, let's plug the URAWARRIOR platform as well. So what was the URL for that?

Bershan Shaw:

Yeah, thank you. So please go sign up now, you'll get V I P perks. [www. the letter U-R-AWarrior.com](http://www.theletterU-R-AWarrior.com). Please follow on Instagram, URAWarrior and then you'd find me Bershan Shaw. B-E-R-S-H-A-N, S-H-A-W on Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook, all of that, and go get your 15 minutes of coaching with me. I'm giving it — Bershan.com. B-E-R-S-H-A-N.com — to small business owners, that's who I'm giving it to. Yes. So please come, and don't be afraid in 2022. It's a change year. It's a life-changing year. Now, go be great!

Gene Marks:

Bershan, you're awesome. Thank you so much for joining me. It was a great conversation, and I want to wish you the best of luck.

Gene Marks:

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Announcer:

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