

THE LEADERSHIP OF LISTENING: INTERVIEW WITH YVONNE PEARSON

Transcribed by: Feliz Pearson (Interviewer)

Feliz Pearson (Interviewer): Hello everyone, thank you for tuning into this interview. My name's Feliz Pearson and I am so excited to introduce my guest Yvonne Pearson, or in other words, my mom. Today we will be discussing her story, her outlook on life, and what specifically makes her a leader.

Feliz Pearson: Hi Mommy!

Yvonne Pearson (Interviewee): Hi Feliz!

Feliz: Thank you for taking this time to conversate with me today. And even though I already know you...I would like you to introduce yourself to a general audience.

Yvonne: Sure! I am Yvonne Pearson. I'm thirty-nine years old and I'm Feliz's mom.

Feliz: Great Answer!

Feliz: Okay! How would you describe yourself in three words?

Yvonne: I would say that I am fun...I am optimistic and authentic.

Feliz: Do you want to say why you would describe yourself as those things?

Yvonne: Um... I would say that being authentic is something that I developed over time. Um, realizing that being my best true self is the best way to live life in general.

Feliz: Great.

Feliz: Okay, so mommy, can you tell us a little bit about your background like where you're from, how you grew up.

Yvonne: Sure so I was born in the Ivory Coast, I then moved to Europe uh when I was five between Belgium and France, and ultimately moved to the United states at the age of twelve.

Feliz: Alright, so where is the Ivory Coast...

Yvonne: thats a-

Feliz: for our listeners.

Yvonne: Sure, it's a West African country.

Feliz: 'Kay. What caused you to move there [Europe] what caused all this moving throughout your life and childhood?

Yvonne: So...when my father was diagnosed with cancer he had to move back to Belgium which is where he's from um for treatment and my mother became a single mother and had to split us, you know, me and my older sisters to different family members so that she could relocate to France and find a new job, a new home um for us to, you know, move back to live with her.

Feliz: So how did you eventually end up in Atlanta [Atlanta, Georgia]?

Yvonne: So my father eventually passed away when I was ten and my mother wanted more support and had a brother that lived in Atlanta who offered for, you know, for her to move here and have more family support.

Feliz: Okay, so how do you think all of this impacted you today? After all of this chaos in your childhood.

Yvonne: Yeah so it was def chaotic but it def taught me how to adapt to different situations and um having good adapting skills helps me on so many levels whether its, you know, moving around learning new languages, adapting to cultures uh career wise this is a life skill that I use in every part of my life.

Feliz: Okay so can you compare your life here to your life in Europe and how was that transition for you?

Yvonne: The transition was definitely hard especially moving here at twelve years old, 7th grade you're a middle schooler, I think everybody and can already relate to those challenges alone--

Feliz: Right

Yvonne: right but not only that. Not speaking the language, not being familiar with the culture. But I was excited about moving to the U.S. Learning about the American dreams and all the things I've seen on T.V such as the McDonald burgers, you know, the uh rap videos. All the things that you dream about, you know uh.. seeing the United States from a– from another country so that excitement helped me, you know, adapt a little bit more although it was challenging. Um and eventually I feel like I did a really good job at um making it the best experience that I could.

Feliz: Right. Okay so now being in your adult life, how– how far have you come...since your first experience in the United States.

Yvonne: Ahh...so raising kids taught me alot and I think the natural desire as a parent is to give your children a better uh you know childhood experience than you had so being able to give 'em a little bit more stability. Um being able to also, you know expose them to my cultural experience whether it's the food that we ate, the language that we spoke um taking them to different places so that they could experience that.

Feliz: Looking back. Who do you think influenced you the most in your life?

Yvonne: I would definitely say my mother uh she was the present parent figure in my life and I learned a lot of skills from her um as far as you know raising a family, keeping a household, um making good decisions, having good morals, so I feel like I see a lot of my mom in me today and that's why I would say she was a good influencer.

Feliz: Right, so based on that do you feel like you influence anyone in your life now? Or–

Yvonne: Yes! I would say it's also full cycle–

Feliz: Okay

Yvonne: I now influence my children. I do see some of myself in them. In some of the way they think in some of the way they act—

Feliz: Wow

Yvonne: In some of their preferences whether it's food or the type of friendships the type of activities that they like to do. So, yes! I feel like my mom influenced me and now I also have influenced my kids.

Yvonne: My daughter Lula is as clean as I am and very disciplined. She likes her routines and I'm a very routined person as well.

Feliz: You are.

Feliz: Okay. So. This will be the final question. Do you see yourself as a leader? If so...

Yvonne: I definitely do see myself as a leader um... I'm a gentle leader. That's the best way to describe it. I feel like I uh influence my children in a positive way. At least I try to as a mom by allowing you guys to make your own decisions, think things through um...so I try to lead with a positive mindset and also [be] respectful of how you guys think.

Feliz: Okay! Thank you so much!

Yvonne: Thank you, Feliz!

Feliz: Goodnight.