



Get more of what you want and less of what you don't, both personally and professionally.

## Interview with Pierce J. Brooks

### *“Meaning Through Madness”*

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- **Pierce’s TEDx Talk, “Playing the Game of Social Pressure”, discusses how he pivoted away from professionally playing Basketball, even though that was what everyone expected from him.**
  - Are you owning your life? Is there something you are holding back from, but it is against what others expect from you? How can you start embracing that, and pivoting in the direction you want to go despite the social pressure?
  - How can you start focusing on what you want, rather than focusing on pleasing others?
- **He discusses losing his father, as well as many athletic scholarships throughout his college journey. Despite these losses, he continued pushing forward until he graduated from Dickinson State University and was the University’s first ever student Commencement Speaker.**
  - Have you ever endured hardship but continued making Positive Forward Motion? How did it make you feel once you accomplished that goal?
  - Make a list of the things you can focus on to help you keep moving forward through future hardships, one step at a time
- **Pierce said he was able to keep moving forward because he searched out the dots of inspiration and light in his life (i.e. his love for public speaking, and empowering others through sharing his story) and connected them himself.**
  - What are “the dots” in your life that you can connect?
  - Reflect on a time when you faced a difficult situation. Looking back, what was the good that came out of that experience? For example, did you discover a new passion or purpose, make new relationships, or strengthen old ones, etc.?
- **He discusses the challenges he faced as an African American man perceived to be Biracial, and his personal experiences as the target of racism. Pierce emphasizes that change needs to happen, and everyone needs to have “skin in the game” of human rights and Black Lives Matter.**
  - It is important for everyone to educate themselves, not view this as “just a black issue” and confront racial injustice at every opportunity.

- Do what you can to help today by calling, texting, signing petitions, and donating. Visit <https://blacklivesmatters.carrd.co/> to see what you can do right now.
- **Pierce's main takeaway for the listeners is that if we do the internal work, we are going to be able to connect the dots of our experiences, and through that connect with others by telling our stories. Through that, it is important to have conversations with others whose experiences are different than ours, so that we all have skin in the game and can work together to move forward.**
  - The next time you come across someone with a different experience and opinion than yours, rather than look away or argue, have an open discussion about that topic.
  - What is one thing you can do today to empower others?

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