

## AUDIO TRANSCRIPT

### Ayers Institute “My Why” Podcast

*Episode 4 – June 2018*

Title: *Reva Chatman-Buckley*

#### SPEAKERS

|            |                      |                                                                                                                                         |
|------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>RM</b>  | Rachael Milligan     | Managing Director, Ayers Institute for Teacher Learning & Innovation                                                                    |
| <b>RCB</b> | Reva Chatman-Buckley | Associate Professor of Graduate Research & Research Coordination in the Lipscomb University College of Education (Nashville, Tennessee) |

#### FULL TRANSCRIPT

##### *INTRODUCTION:*

**RM:** For some it is a decision made after a moment of epiphany. For others, they can't imagine a time when they wanted to be anything else. They are teachers. They are leaders. They are life changers. These are their stories.

**RCB:** My name is Reva Chatman-Buckley from Hampshire, Tennessee. And this is My Why.

I think it's extremely important to make sure students feel a sense of community. It drives teaching, in my estimation, that sense of community. That must be developed early and you must also continue to build to that sense of community. It's an ongoing process that makes for a very good environment for teaching and learning.

**RM:** Welcome to My Why: Stories of Inspiration from Educators. This podcast is presented by the Ayers Institute for Teacher Learning & Innovation and brought to you by the College of Education at Lipscomb University, where 21<sup>st</sup> century educators are prepared to involve, impact, and inspire.

My name is Rachel Milligan.

Today we're joined by Dr. Reva Chatman-Buckley associate professor of graduate research and research coordination in the College of Education at Lipscomb University. She has also served as an English teacher, a school administrator, and the Middle School human resources director for Metro Nashville Public Schools.

Reva, thank you for being here today.

**RCB:** You're welcome. Thanks for inviting me!

##### *EPISODE BODY:*

**RM:** What would you say is one moment that sums up your passion for education?

**RCB:** The one that sticks out in my mind is a situation, where teachers were rallying for a raise in Metro Schools. And my understanding is that all of the students in Metro were going to boycott classes at 10 o'clock on a Friday morning. I was with my middle schoolers at Donaldson. I told my students that I

## AUDIO TRANSCRIPT

appreciated their support, but that we would work through this and they did not have to leave classes to show their support.

So, I was talking and my students kept reminding me "Okay you have three minutes and we're out of here." And I said, "Okay, well, you decide how you want to handle this, but I still say I prefer that you not leave." So, at 10:00, all of my students rose from their desks and headed toward the door. And, the shortest student in class ran in front of the whole group and blocked the door and waved his arms. And said "No, we can't leave. We'll get Miss Chatman in trouble." And everybody sat down and we watched all of the melee outside. The principals on their bullhorns urging students to get back in the building, and we we're sitting there watching.

And I felt like that was the pivotal moment in education for me, because of the relationship I had developed with those students. And because, they cared for me enough to say, "We can't do this. We have to stay here, so that our teacher will be okay." And that convinced me of the importance of developing that sense of community.

**RM:** I love hearing that story. I'd like to shift now into your personal journey of– why did you decide to become an educator?

**RCB:** I think it happened by happenstance. Okay, I became a teacher. I think I was predestined to become a teacher, based upon what happened. It was almost like it was out of my hands.

I was young, 17, when I entered college and my desire was to become a news reporter or a news anchor, to be an Oprah Winfrey. That was my dream. So, I was very much interested in becoming a news reporter, in fact this teacher brought me to Nashville to visit a radio station, when I was first coming to college. When I got to TSU I was told that they only had one journalism class. And so, I went to my advisor to ask what I should do, and I was told to major in English. Switch my major to English, because the news reporter had to have a good command of the English language and be able to write well. So, I took her advice, and became an English major. But all of English majors were required to get certified in teaching, so I just followed my classmates and got certified to teach and did my student teaching.

And I needed a job after graduation, so I said well why don't I try to apply for a teaching job. So, I did apply, and was hired as a seventh-grade English teacher. And after a few months of working with those seventh-grade students, I was hooked.

I was on a stage, somewhat, which I think was close to being in the media. And as I look back on teaching, I had a very, very good career in teaching- very great experiences. As I look back on it, I think – had I been in the media and having to travel and be away from home a lot – I would not have been here for my nieces and nephews. And they lost their mom when they were teenagers. And they came to me that night when she died. And they never left.

There were four of them and I consider them my children. They have done really well, because I was concerned if they would all graduate from high school but they all did. Two of them have graduated college and so I'm just very proud of what I was able to do as a result of my connections in education.

**RM:** You mentioned earlier that it was a teacher who brought you to a radio station in Nashville.

**RCB:** Right.

## AUDIO TRANSCRIPT

**RM:** Talk about what- I mean- what kind of relationship did you have to have with that teacher for that to happen?

**RCB:** Oh, my goodness! She was my favorite teacher of all times. She taught science, which was not my favorite subject. English was my favorite subject, but she turned me on to science in a tremendous way.

I worked hard for her, but I think I worked hard for her, because she looked out for me in ways that other teachers did not. So, when I got ready to go to TSU, she's the one who brought me to the radio station and also stood with me in line to register for classes at TSU. Now what teacher does that?

So, I used her pattern. You see we learn from each other. So, what did I do? I taught with heart like she did. I always try to do that with heart and make sure my students feel that they are accepted, they belong. But my brother went to Vietnam, and when he came back I encouraged him to enroll in TSU. And what did I do? I stood with him in line while he registered for his classes.

And that's what teachers do. We teach skills that our students can take with them forever.

**RM:** I'd like to ask you to sum up your My Why story in six words or less.

**RCB:** I was predestined to teach. I think God knew what I was going to have to face. And he knew that I had, within me, something to offer lots of young people. And he made sure I did that through teaching, which has been a blessing for I know my nieces and nephews.

**RM:** Thank you so much.

**RCB:** Thank you for inviting me. It's been a joy.

### *CONCLUSION:*

**RM:** As we close today's episode we encourage our listeners to continue the conversation about your motivation with your colleagues. What inspires you to do what you do? What is your why? Share your ideas on social media using @AyersInstitute and the #MyWhy. Also, check out the handout including some of Dr. Chatman-Buckley's favorite resources, lessons learned, her six-word memoir, and other helpful information. This handout can be found on <http://eduTOOLBOX.org>.

Connect with Lipscomb's College of Education on social media @LipscombCofEd and with the Ayers Institute on Facebook and Twitter @AyersInstitute.

I'm Rachel Milligan producer and host for the My Why podcast. This episode was directed by Julia Osteen. Forest Doddington handles editing and technical production. This podcast is brought to you by Lipscomb University's College of Education.

Thank you for joining us for My Why: Stories of Inspiration from Educators. Look for other episodes of this podcast and other Ayers Institute Professional Learning Podcasts at <http://podcast.ayersinstitute.org>.