



Joe Brim, Rob Smith, Yogi Terrell

Joe Brim: [00:00:00] I mean, I think there's so many touch points, right? I mean, I think there's so many ways that the connection can happen. I mean, there are some things that they have to learn that we pushed them through math and science, you know, social studies and all of those things. But for them to actually see themselves and think through this lens is where I think the biggest connection is.

Annalies Corbin: [00:00:22] Welcome to Learning Unboxed, a conversation about teaching, learning and the future of work. This is Annalies Corbin, Chief Goddess of the PAST Foundation and your host. We hear frequently that the global education system is broken. In fact, we spend billions of dollars trying to fix something that's actually not broken at all, but rather irrelevant. It's obsolete. A hundred years ago, it functioned fine. So, let's talk about how we re-imagine, rethink and redesign our educational system.

Annalies Corbin: [00:00:58] Welcome to the next episode of Learning Unboxed. This is your host, Annalies Corbin. And as always, I am super excited about our conversation today. And in particular, today, we are going to talk about the fashion industry and we're going to talk about the amazing career potential that that industry has to offer with three folks from Columbus, Ohio, who are eyeball-deeps in the weeds, as it would be, trying to make it possible for our kids in our community to get involved in the fashion industry. So, joining us today, we have Joe Brem. And Joe describes himself as an engagement experience strategist and creative, who focuses on design through the eyes of the end user. And how awesome is that, Joe?

Joe Brim: [00:01:45] I mean, it's fun for me. I love it. I love it.

Annalies Corbin: [00:01:48] Well, welcome.

Joe Brim: [00:01:49] Thank you for having me.

Annalies Corbin: [00:01:50] Thank you.

Joe Brim: [00:01:50] I appreciate it.

Annalies Corbin: [00:01:52] And also, joining Joe is Yohannan Terrell or a.k.a. Yogi, as we all know him locally, who is CEO and partner of Warhol & WALL ST. and the new lead director of the Columbus Fashion Initiative. So welcome, Yogi.

Yogi Terrell: [00:02:07] Yeah, yeah. Thank you. Thank you for having me.

Annalies Corbin: [00:02:08] We are very excited also to have with us Rob Smith joining today. And so, Rob is a chemist who travels the world, transforming the fashion industry through science and innovation, and is also equally passionate about getting kids involved. So, welcome.

Rob Smith: [00:02:26] Thank you for the opportunity.

Annalies Corbin: [00:02:27] So, we're going to just roll up our sleeves and dig right in. Yes. And everybody is helping me out with that. So, you know, I just knew that that's how this crowd was going to go today. So, a little bit of context for our listeners. So, I don't know exactly—I was thinking about this this morning as I was driving to work. I don't exactly remember the first time I met the three of you guys. And I know it wasn't altogether. And it may have been that Yogi showed up at PAST first to talk about this idea. And I said, "Come." And then, I was able to meet the two of you. But we've collectively been having this conversation about what would it mean if we could show kids how to get involved in this career for, what, about 18 months?

Joe Brim: [00:03:08] Yeah.

Yogi Terrell: [00:03:08] Yeah. Yeah.

Joe Brim: [00:03:09] About that.

Yogi Terrell: [00:03:09] Yeah. Time flies.

Annalies Corbin: [00:03:11] It does. And, you know, it's been a big effort. So, Yogi, let's start with you a little bit in the sense of, set this stage for us about—or anybody else, whoever you think is best to jump in. But let's first and foremost talk about the fashion industry and why Columbus, Ohio? Because the other piece that I didn't mention, we've got programs and shows that come from all over the world right now on this series. And so, the Columbus Fashion Initiative based right here in Central Ohio, why the heck? Why fashion? There's nobody out there in the world who is not involved in fashion is going to say, "Hey, Columbus, Ohio", why is that? Who's jumping in here?

Yogi Terrell: [00:03:54] Well, I mean—and anybody can jump in, but I think, you know, we've built our city around fashion because of the retailers here, the designers, the logistics, but a lot of people just don't know about that part. So, fashion is really a big part of the fabric of—our city is one of the biggest industries. So, we have, you know, health care, insurance, education, but fashion is right up there in our top four or five industry in Columbus. But it just hasn't been really embraced as part of our culture. It kind of exists here. And so, you know—but, yeah, there's a lot of interesting, you know, facts around that. But I mean, we've had fashion ingrained in our history from, you know, years, years before, we were one of the biggest manufacturers for shoes up until the '70s. A lot of people don't know that. Columbus-

Annalies Corbin: [00:04:40] No idea.

Yogi Terrell: [00:04:41] Yeah. Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:04:42] No idea.

Yogi Terrell: [00:04:42] Columbus is a major city. And so, we've had fashion that's been still in the fabric of the city for years. But like I said, it's just the culture and the awareness of it, you know, outside of the city hasn't really been done, I guess, well. Yeah. Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:04:56] Yeah. And I think that the other thing, too, is, and I certainly hear this from kids all the time, if you ask a kiddo about, "Hey, why might I be interested, you know, or you interested in going into fashion?", of a very, very narrow sense of what that means. So, Joe, I know you and I talked about that really early on in this. When you think about the way kids approached this topic, it's not the breadth and depth that this industry has to offer.

Joe Brim: [00:05:25] It is not. It is not. I mean, thanks to Rob and Yogi for bringing me into the picture. Again, I am a creative, right?

Annalies Corbin: [00:05:31] Right.

Joe Brim: [00:05:31] And so, when I was young, I always look at it from the lens that I didn't know about design and the impact of design until college. So, really think about the length of time that I went through life, having the ability to create, having the ability to design and draw, but not recognizing that I could have—I could actually provide for my family using that skill set. And we felt that if we can get that in front of kids pre-K or K up and through their senior year in high school, that could give them some information to show that, "Hey, your skill sets in this industry could be used in invaluable ways." And you can be a part of a sexy industry doing something that is, you know, behind the scene. So, I felt that that was just the lens that I took when I approached the project.

Annalies Corbin: [00:06:16] And I think that the other thing that I love about the way you kept the conversation and you put this in the information that you also said to me and I had forgotten, but we had talked about it before, that you hate seeing wasted talent.

Joe Brim: [00:06:26] Yes, 100%.

Annalies Corbin: [00:06:27] And for a thousand different reasons, I think that we fail to tap into kids' creativity, their passion and certainly, their talents early and often. They do wander around in the world trying to figure out, what the heck am I going to be doing?

Joe Brim: [00:06:43] And it's commonly the first thing they throw out.

Annalies Corbin: [00:06:45] Yeah.

Joe Brim: [00:06:45] If there are any financial issues with the school system or whatever the case may be, it's usually the first thing thrown out, when in my opinion, that's the first thing that should stay. That is the thing that should stay. And most of the time, people with wasted talent isn't by choice, it's by ignorance.

Annalies Corbin: [00:07:01] Right.

Joe Brim: [00:07:01] "I just don't know what else to do or how to do it."

Annalies Corbin: [00:07:04] Right.

Joe Brim: [00:07:04] And I believe this provides that opportunity.

Annalies Corbin: [00:07:06] And I can't even imagine myself doing it.

Joe Brim: [00:07:08] Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:07:08] Whatever that happens to me, which brings me to Rob because one of my favorite conversations that you and I had early on and this was about the fact that, you know, as a chemist in this industry and your training and experience in this industry has led you to see so many different pieces of the industry from a practical-working standpoint and yet, you don't see folks moving that direction.

Rob Smith: [00:07:34] No, absolutely. You know, it's funny because I go back to going to NC State and studying textiles, right? I remember, you know, when I got accepted to college and afford to go to college and my family, it's traditional, right? So, straight out of high school into college. And I'm good at math and science, you should be engineer. NC State happened to go to my school, do a presentation during my physics class. And that was the first time I ever found out what a textile was. So, I'm really, really excited. I go home, tell my dad, you know, "I want to switch from engineering to going textiles."

Rob Smith: [00:08:06] And he used some choice language and partly, you know, lack of exposure, "What is a textile, right? I'm like, "I don't know, but still college, it's still NC State." So, he supported my decision and it wasn't really until my freshman year that I started to learn a little bit more about what textile and textile sciences is. And specifically, what got me was I'm a big sneaker guy. So, the moment they kind of told me that you could do this and work for like a company like Nike, like you got me hooked and baited. So-

Annalies Corbin: [00:08:39] I'm in.

Rob Smith: [00:08:40] I'm in. But it kind of goes back to what Joe said, it's lack of exposure. I didn't even know, you know, those opportunities, and I even think about the role that I currently have today. Going to NC State, studying textiles, being in the industry, if you will. Didn't even realize that the job that I'm doing today even exists. So, like I took the route of, you know, the right school, the right career, if you will, choosing kind of the program that I was going to study and still stumbled into the job that I have today.

Annalies Corbin: [00:09:10] That you love, clearly.

Rob Smith: [00:09:10] That I absolutely love.

Annalies Corbin: [00:09:12] Yeah. And you share with kids all the time.

Rob Smith: [00:09:13] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:09:13] We'll circle back around that part. So, Yogi, your path was similar but different. And then, now, you're driving this crazy thing called the Columbus Fashion Initiative. So, where's that connection for you?

Yogi Terrell: [00:09:27] Yeah. Well, I think growing up for me, I've always loved fashion and I remember, you know, growing up, probably all the way up to middle school, like we were very poor. So, you know, I think fashion also is a part of innovation, like you have to kind of make, which you can make out of something, make something out of nothing, right? And so, I remember, you know, once I got to the age where, you know, people start to recognize what do you got on, you know, I had to start being creative. So, I've always been in the fashion.

Yogi Terrell: [00:09:55] And me being, you know, now a grown man and graduating school and, you know, doing business and branding, it really started to me as like a brand exercise. And part of branding, a lot of people don't know, brand is not marketing, it's more about what you really offer the world. What are you

bringing to the table? And so, as a brand exercise, we started to look at Columbus and say, "Hey, what is Columbus's brand?" Columbus has a lot of talent here. We have a lot of great things about our city, but outside of the market, a lot of people just don't know how great this city is until they get here.

Yogi Terrell: [00:10:30] And so, as we were doing this brand exercise, you know, we started to see all of the information about fashion. And of course, because I'm into fashion, I got interested. Instantly, I'm like, "What is this about fashion?" And so, actually started to read all of the history and what we have. I'm like, this is a huge opportunity for the city because like you said, fashion is sexy. When people look at the industry, when they hear fashion, everybody makes a fashion decision every morning, right? So, it's like-

Annalies Corbin: [00:10:58] That is design thinking 101.

Rob Smith: [00:10:59] Yes.

Yogi Terrell: [00:10:59] Design thinking 101.

Annalies Corbin: [00:11:00] Yeah.

Yogi Terrell: [00:11:00] You get up every day, you tap into your right brain, left brain, whatever, and you think, okay, based on trends, my personality, what colors I like, I, you know, create out of my head, okay, I see myself wearing black today with this green and this camo or with the red hat. And that's one of the first decisions you make. So, understanding that and seeing that we had all of this expertise in fashion, you know, we started to poke around. And three years later, we're finally, you know, getting to that point. We're starting to make it a serious conversation here in the city because of all of the resources and talent and experts that we have here. Yeah. So, now, here we are, right?

Annalies Corbin: [00:11:38] Yeah. Here we are. And I would like to point out, so in our PAST design thinking workshops, I often use the, "Hey, guess what, you got up this morning and started down the road and design thinking." But I would add to your analogy there, Yogi, that, you know, just some folks are just better at it than others because they are some absolute at big failures. I mean, the good news is folks don't show up at our workshops, you know, but make it.

Yogi Terrell: [00:12:04] Right. Right.

Annalies Corbin: [00:12:04] So, there was some success. However, I think that there is a whole range of how one would decide to define success in that case.

Yogi Terrell: [00:12:15] Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:12:15] Right?

Yogi Terrell: [00:12:15] That's pretty-

Annalies Corbin: [00:12:15] But I do reference the same exact thing all the time, you know, we all got up, we went through this whole process. And, you know, hopefully, there was some modification along the way. And for some of you, we still need to do some more modification. Now, I often raise my hand and say, "Yeah, that would be me because I'm terrible at it", but it works out.

Rob Smith: [00:12:34] You look great today.

Annalies Corbin: [00:12:34] Okay.

Yogi Terrell: [00:12:35] Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:12:35] Well, thank you for that, Rob. It works out. But let's circle back around then. And prior to getting to the launch of the fashion initiative itself, there's been some real deliberate work that you collectively, and I know Rob leading pieces within the school, so let's talk about sort of the last two years, as you, the three of you and others that have joined in the work that you're doing are playing in the K-12 space around saying, if we were to create a thing that makes this more accessible, what would it look like and how we go about doing that? So, let's talk a little bit about that journey.

Rob Smith: [00:13:14] So, for me, it actually started really, really granular, right? It was really an idea that myself and one of my colleagues, Marcus Green, were having at lunch one day. What we kind of recognize it as being in the space that we're in, in a corporate facility being kind of the only two Black, one of the only two Black males kind of there, there was a missing opportunity. Marcus, for those that haven't had a chance to meet him, is a creative and self-trained in many different ways.

Rob Smith: [00:13:41] So, he has a number of access to resources and were like at the smallest space will use the space that you have and would just facilitate workshops. So, Joe, being my collaborator, we're breaking bread in a number of other things and having launched his brand, Below the Brim. But the idea to him was like, yo. So, for us, it was never really the idea of taking it to a school. It was really these facilitate workshops and use again the idea of fashion to start to expose kids to the opportunities that could present themselves.

Rob Smith: [00:14:13] Again, ran into Yogi through a friend who used to work with me as well. And she connected us and he actually had the infrastructure. I had started to work a little bit with the Columbus schools based upon some other relationships that were kind of manifesting themselves. But really, it was kind of meeting Yogi who then introduced us to you that really start to really bring this to, you know, idea of just workshops and somebody's small print shop so that actually, we can actually build infrastructure and actually have a real impact.

Annalies Corbin: [00:14:45] So, Joe, when you think about the opportunity for kids, the tangible opportunity for kids, not just like the bigger, broader career aspiration, but the opportunity in that moment, working with kids, where do you see the biggest connection piece or opportunity for kids to understand, "Hey, this could be more than I think it could be."

Joe Brim: [00:15:06] I mean, I think there's so many touch points, right? I mean, I think there's so many ways that the connection can happen. I mean, there are some things that they have to learn that we pushed them through math, science, you know, social studies and all of those things. But for them to actually see themselves and think through this lens is where I think the biggest connection is, where they can actually sit back and recognize the thing that I participate in everyday day, which I didn't think about that until you just said that, everyone does get dressed every day, right?

Annalies Corbin: [00:15:36] We hope.

Joe Brim: [00:15:36] Yeah. But they do. But that thing that is heavily involved around you or you're a part of and you participate in, that you can actually see life through that lens, I believe that that's the connection. And

then, the gift of that is you can actually see how you can contribute to that once you realize and recognize that you—that this lens could be a way to grow up in or to grow in. So-

Annalies Corbin: [00:16:01] And the other thing that I would be perfectly honest that I love about this particular program, and as soon as Yogi and I first started having that conversation, I was like, yeah, this one, we need to run after and run after hard and not give up on, right? It took us a lot of time, 18 months or so to keep having the conversation and coming back. But one of the reasons for that is because it is a unique opportunity around individuality, right?

Annalies Corbin: [00:16:25] Right. So, even if you are in a school or environment that has uniforms with really strict controls around that, the individual person still shines through, right? There's that opportunity. And I think that that's really meaningful because there is a lot of things that we do or we do to kids that stripped those components away inside of a traditional sort of schooling environment if we're not careful, right?

Joe Brim: [00:16:51] Yeah.

Yogi Terrell: [00:16:51] Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:16:51] So, I love that about the concept. So, let's dig into the weeds about sort of the bigger overarching umbrella. And then, we're going to dive in specifically on the education piece because the fashion initiative actually encompasses several different pillars. It's not just the education piece. So, Yogi, give us the overview.

Yogi Terrell: [00:17:09] Yes. Sure. So, based on our research, so we had to do our research, so that's why we've been working on this since about 2017 and taking it slow because we wanted to really understand what the full landscape looked like. And so, after talking to many retailers here, the city, the county, we started doing more research and just learning and learning and learning. And so, from that, we did a qualitative study and a quantitative study.

Yogi Terrell: [00:17:35] And from those studies, where we interviewed students, we interviewed retailers, we interviewed entrepreneurs and creators. A lot of the information that came back in their study basically showed us what the opportunity was. And so, the pillars are based off of that. So, from the information they gave us, we saw that there was an opportunity to really dive into education. So, there are four pillars, learn, make, innovate and experience.

Yogi Terrell: [00:18:01] And those really were the four areas that stood out the most out of our study. So, education. And just to kind of piggyback off what you were saying, Joe, is that when you're not exposed to something, you don't know the opportunity there. And then, when you look at certain cities or you look at like a San Francisco, where tech is definitely a part of their, you know, community, it's part of the fabric of that city.

Yogi Terrell: [00:18:23] And so, they have tech in K-12, right? So, these students that live in this market have a better opportunity to become, you know, the next generation of tech startups or a tech workforce and things like that because it's being—they're being exposed to a younger age. And so, knowing that we have all that. So, anyway, just touched on that, but I think that's very important. We could come back to that.

Annalies Corbin: [00:18:43] Yeah.

Yogi Terrell: [00:18:43] So, education, getting more education about the business of fashion, the different parts of fashion, making, which is providing opportunities for people to create. We have the third largest

amount of designers in our market per capital than any other city outside of New York and LA. But you also have a growing culture of designers here locally and creatives, period, not just designers. You know, entrepreneurs who want to start a brand or tech people who want to get into wearables. You have those people.

Yogi Terrell: [00:19:11] But how do we have—do we have the tools to make it? So, make is another pillar. And then, innovate. You know, it's all about innovation, sustainability. How do we get to market faster? How do we cut down timelines? How do we use innovation to move fashion forward? So, innovation is a pillar. And then, experience. You know, coming into Columbus, like you said, you don't know that we're a fashion city. If you look at the rooftops or the tops of the buildings, it's insurance, it's health care, it's banks, it's financials, things like that.

Yogi Terrell: [00:19:40] But you don't see the—you know, when you come to the airport, you don't see, "Hey, we're a fashion city", you know. So, creating more experiences here to really put that on a platform and show people, "Hey, this is where it's happening." That inspires, that trickles down, right? And so, the more and more we embed it into our culture, all of that stuff starts to trickle down, impacts the next generation, which is why we all vibe down so much on the conversations because that's the future, right? And we all have a passion for helping the next generation. So, those are the four pillars. Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:20:11] Yeah. And people ask me all the time, why Columbus? You know, why are you in Columbus? Why does PAST Foundation not do it anywhere? Why would you choose this place? And my response is almost always, why wouldn't we be in Columbus? This is an amazing city. And I am blown away by this all the time. And I'm reminded of the culture and the community and the way that it leverages the notion of startup and innovation and design. And we do truly have this ecosystem here that in many ways, because it's in the middle of a country and, you know, it's not LA or San Francisco or it's not New York, but it has created and drawn a collective set of people to this place that gives us a breadth and depth that most places don't get to see.

Joe Brim: [00:21:02] Yeah.

Yogi Terrell: [00:21:02] Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:21:02] So, in my mind, one of the big goals or tasks that we have as a community is how do we harness the collective set of assets that we have here, A, to keep them so we don't lose them, but B, to use them as that opportunity to help others find their path coming back to some of the things that we've been collectively talking about. So, you know, in my mind, when we first had the conversation around, "Hey, let's do something with fashion."

Annalies Corbin: [00:21:29] And, you know, my thinking on it has changed over the course of the conversation, right? As I said at the beginning, who knew? I certainly didn't, right? And so, I've learned so much along the way about, A, what the industry in our community is, but what the potential then for how we would craft thinking about that with students. And so, part of that work as we move forward is around this idea of creating pathways, access points for students.

Annalies Corbin: [00:21:57] So, I want to sort of dive into that a little bit because we, all three of us, have talked about this in one form or another. So, I'm going to throw this out, and whoever wants to sort of jump on, but when we think about sort of the variety of pathway experiences that we can take from a fashion lens, what are the things that first come to mind? I mean, the obvious, you know, in terms of just traditional fashion design, but I'm really more interested in the not so obvious.

Rob Smith: [00:22:24] Yeah. So, I'll take a stab at it. I think the first thing is, you know, as consumers, we all vote with our dollars, right?

Annalies Corbin: [00:22:29] Right.

Rob Smith: [00:22:30] So, we all—the same way that we choose what ensemble to put on for the day, we vote how to spend our dollars and obviously our money. And I think one of the things that was really important to me throughout this process is oftentimes, you know, being a Black man, specifically in the industry, you don't see yourself in these corporate types of roles, right? So, if you think about the Black community and, you know, one of the biggest intellectual properties that we have is the ability to set trends, right?

Rob Smith: [00:23:01] So, how do we create opportunities to leverage those, kind of the style and that aspect and bring it to. And I remember, when I first started working in corporate and I would say, you know, insert, which retail I was working at at the time, and often, I would be asked two questions, what store was I at? And then, two, if I wasn't at a store, what distribution center did I work in? So, like people in certain communities couldn't even fathom the idea of me being in a corporate upstairs type of role, right? So, for me, I think it is-

Annalies Corbin: [00:23:34] They didn't see it in leadership, right?

Rob Smith: [00:23:36] No.

Annalies Corbin: [00:23:36] Take your pick how you define that.

Rob Smith: [00:23:38] Exactly. And I think—so part for me goes like, how do you start to have an intentional conversation with yes, it's important that you vote with your dollars and you bought things that support your values and kind of help you express the idea that how you present yourself. But equally, how do we start to have real conversations with some of these retailers about how do we create pathways of the people that are making your brands cool, having access to opportunities that can change the narrative of their lives, right? So, in one generation, I go from being the first to go to college to what this industry has afforded me to expose my son to.

Annalies Corbin: [00:24:14] Right.

Rob Smith: [00:24:14] And Joe and I often have conversations about the benefits that our kids are going to be able to get just from the pure conversations that we have and what we're exposing them to now at 10, you know, 11 years old.

Annalies Corbin: [00:24:25] So, Joe, when you think about the career opportunity—or so you're navigating and mentoring a set of kids to go down this road in the fashion industry, what are some of the key components that you're tagging for these kiddos to say, "Hey, you can do this, you can do this, you can do this", that you sort of see are some sweet spots? Because part of this, and as we circle back around, you know, I'm a teacher somewhere out there in the world and I'm sitting here listening to these three guys talk to me about the fashion industry. You know, first and foremost, the majority of teachers are female. And so, there's a sort of mismatch to some extent there in working with some kiddos. And the other piece is we also don't necessarily assume that the fashion industry and certainly not the moving of more and more kids into this is just going to be led by a group of men.

Joe Brim: [00:25:23] Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:25:23] So, we have a lot of inherent biases in our understanding of this industry, no question whatsoever. So, you've got this captive of kids and you're advising a teacher in the middle of nowhere, "Hey, let's go ahead and you can do this yourself", what is it that you're telling them, the components they're drawing on?

Joe Brim: [00:25:40] It's funny you are asking me.

Annalies Corbin: [00:25:41] I am asking you, Joe, for a reason.

Joe Brim: [00:25:44] I'll leave it to—

Rob Smith: [00:25:44] I'm not—

Joe Brim: [00:25:44] I mean, check this out, this is why it's important, this is from my perspective, and I think you hinted at it when you were speaking of how we are at this point. Now, just imagine all three of us right now and me specifically, I really don't know the fashion industry in detail like a Rob or like a Yogi. I know that I have a skill set and one way that I could express that skill set is creating own teams, right? And that's the approach I took.

Annalies Corbin: [00:26:11] Right.

Joe Brim: [00:26:11] And in the conversations that I'm having with the Rob and that I'm having with the Yogi and I'm having with Annalies, I'm learning so much about the fashion industry that I would never have known in any other way. Ideas like, you know, how to run a process, the manufacturing and the distribution, which in addition to how to actually sew, how to actually craft and pattern things in a way that has longevity, that can stay on the shelves, which color combinations to choose from. These are things that I did not go out and search, and I did not know existed, right? But even as an adult and as of today, I can take that information and it helps my creative process when it comes to branding for a Fortune 500 company. So, if you were asking me, you know, which roles a student could learn in this program, I mean, all I could speak from is the creative standpoint.

Rob Smith: [00:27:06] So, I'm-

Annalies Corbin: [00:27:06] But that's the reason I asked you here, Joe.

Rob Smith: [00:27:09] So, what Joe isn't talking to and which is why he know I'm about to get on him is-

Joe Brim: [00:27:13] Yes, he does it all the time.

Rob Smith: [00:27:13] ... there are things—and I think one of the things that Joe does really, really well and most passionate about is what we are essentially doing to create an opportunity that didn't exist for us.

Annalies Corbin: [00:27:24] Exactly.

Rob Smith: [00:27:24] Right. So, Joe could tell you as a creative, when he left undergrad, he had to choose a route of going into corporate because those platforms didn't exist, right? So, when you think about the industry of fashion and the business of fashion, the idea of that role does exist, but many of our students aren't even aware that that's a role that they could take.

Annalies Corbin: [00:27:43] Correct.

Rob Smith: [00:27:43] So, I think that's the piece that Joe, sometimes, you know, skips over, but I think between that and being an entrepreneur and, you know, doing the Below the Brim piece, like those are things that until you actually start down this road, you don't really notice trajectory, a way you could go or how things might manifest themselves.

Joe Brim: [00:27:59] Because we live it, right? I'm living, I'm in the space. I live my life.

Annalies Corbin: [00:28:03] Yeah.

Joe Brim: [00:28:04] So, you don't recognize that, you know, the things that you're doing is truly being—you are exposed to something that you didn't have access to in the beginning. And I just have to throw this out, like I didn't know Yogi for some time. And I honestly did creative, Below the Brim, and it's a fashion label, not even—it's not even a fashion label when we start to think—you know, when you start to think in the context of what true fashion is, but it was a graphic t-shirt. And he was one of the first guys that published me, you know, in his FLYPAPER.

Yogi Terrell: [00:28:35] We have an online magazine, yeah.

Joe Brim: [00:28:36] Right. And the idea that, hold on, now, you can get published, okay. And, you know, he was working at a radio station at the time.

Yogi Terrell: [00:28:46] Yeah, radio station.

Joe Brim: [00:28:46] So, I was exposed to something like that then, which then helped me to turn around until keys that I come into contact with, "Hey, you may not like to design the clothes, but listen, you can actually help promote somebody that's designing it for you." And now, they're like, "What?"

Yogi Terrell: [00:29:00] Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:29:01] Yeah.

Joe Brim: [00:29:01] Right. So-

Annalies Corbin: [00:29:01] And that was the point, right?

Joe Brim: [00:29:04] Okay.

Annalies Corbin: [00:29:05] Because, you know, it's a good idea, Joe. You got it. Because, you know—and you can strip the word fashion industry off of this conversation, and that's the beauty of the work that I think that we are all collectively engaged in, right? And at the end of the day, we're saying, look, pick an industry, pick a career or start the careers. And the reality of it is kids have no idea what any industry entails or where or what the possibility, the potential, they have no idea, right?

Annalies Corbin: [00:29:42] There's entrepreneurship in every industry we could imagine, right? You know, we need the creatives. We need the scientists. We need the folks out there saying, here's the vision component of it. And that the reality is that if you love something, if you are Yogi as a kid who just loves fashion

no matter what long before he truly got into that industry standpoint that that thing I love, that passion that I have can, in fact, turn into an entire career for me.

Yogi Terrell: [00:30:14] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:30:14] And I can, in fact, start to find people who look like me, feel like me, talk like me, come from the same places I come from. You know, as a global enterprise, we have the opportunity and now is the time to change the tide around, how do we help young people think about their futures?

Yogi Terrell: [00:30:34] Yeah.

Joe Brim: [00:30:35] Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:30:35] Right?

Yogi Terrell: [00:30:35] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:30:36] So, Yogi, translate all of that then for us. And to the work of this initiative of the next, say, three to six months because we are collectively getting ready to start the hard work on the pathway stuff. We've got a couple of schools now who are opting in. We're going to be piloting next year.

Yogi Terrell: [00:30:55] Yeah. Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:30:55] So, we're at a really intriguing space.

Yogi Terrell: [00:30:59] And what's exciting about it, like we said before, is the lens. So, I had this conversation with somebody the other day, just a quick story about art. And we were talking about a gallery experience where famous rappers or famous artists or celebrities actually had an exhibit where they showcased another way of their art expression. But the whole point was like as a youth, we look up to certain people.

Yogi Terrell: [00:31:24] And a lot of youth, and when we go speak at schools, you ask the kids, what do you want to be? And they speak about what they see. So, they speak about entertainment. They speak about sports. You know, they are things like that. And so, that's why we all agree that exposure is really where you start. And since you have a lens of fashion, you can ask any youth, whether you have money or not, you know, who are some of the people that influence you.

Yogi Terrell: [00:31:48] And they'll say a Kanye, they'll say they want a pair of Yeezys, they want to pair—you know. So, that's the good thing about this, is that because we have so many people here from different parts of the industry that from this chemist and science, you're able to use fashion to draw men. But then, you say you get them into STEM. So, you know, if I can learn the science behind how Yeezy is made, all of a sudden, now, I'm into fibers and textiles.

Annalies Corbin: [00:32:14] Exactly.

Yogi Terrell: [00:32:14] And so, we were talking about this as we've been on this journey, we've been learning about how many experts like Rob exist in this market, which makes us a unique market. And one of them is one of the guys who helped create some of the Jordans, the, you know, Jordans, which are famous, you know,

infamous Jordan brand is in Columbus three times a month because he works with designer brands here. And so, you could tell more about whatever.

Yogi Terrell: [00:32:40] But, you know, the fact that we have one of the guys who makes one of the most iconic shoes in this market, who has actual platform to teach people how to make shoes, how many youth will get super excited to learn from the guy who made Jordans how to design a shoe, right? And so, those connections are what we're trying to do now. And so, the programs that we're about to launch are really about exposure and creating that pathway, allowing you to see, hey, you see somebody who looks like you, "Guess what? I'm making Jordans." "What? How do I do that?" "Let me show you."

Yogi Terrell: [00:33:11] Where you see me, "I'm working with, you know, Louis Vuitton." "What?" "Let me show you what I do." And so, using fashion as a lens all of a sudden help, if I'm not a designer, how do I feel like I can get engaged? "Oh, well, what are you into?" "Well, I'm into tech and gaming." "Okay. Well, let me show you how that is transferring the experience about how people buy fashion." So, now, you can give into something through the lens of fashion, but also live your passion.

Yogi Terrell: [00:33:35] So, we're starting now, you know, the programs with a couple of schools this year. So, one of the programs we're going to start is a summer program in conjunction with PAST. And with KIPP. In KIPP, we're going to work with KIPP to bring in about 20 students to learn through the lens of fashion things like, you know, science and engineering and, you know, design and marketing. So, we're going to teach them that.

Yogi Terrell: [00:33:58] And then, we're also looking forward to starting a fashion club. You know, just a platform for the youth to get together, to bring fashion to their schools, and then also take fashion up and connect with retailers and educators and things like that. So, that's just the beginning. And so, we're looking forward to how we all collectively bring our minds together to, you know, reach down and expose, and then bring up and connect.

Rob Smith: [00:34:22] So, I'm going to say, back into—two things today. And I think the beauty of this is not being an educator, right? So, respecting, you know, what the PAST Foundation, of what you guys are doing from like building out the process, but then having industry partners like that live in the real life. And I think that for me, it's the intentional collaboration of the two, right? So, I can only tell you about my experiences and you guys have a great ability to translate that and scale it out for it to connect with students. And I think more so people don't feel empowered to create the opportunities. And I think one of the things hopefully this becomes as an example of, you could take something like a small idea and get with the right people around a table and really manifest it to be something beyond your wildest imagination.

Yogi Terrell: [00:35:06] Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:35:07] Yeah. And I think at the end of the day, too, the other thing that I love about it is, you know, we know that if we don't engage kids really, really early and we hook them, we find the thing, you know, back to collective conversation, is that, you know, the fashion and their love of fashion, whether it be shoes or anything else is that hook, right? I know that thing, I'm passionate about the thing, I want to—you know, in this case, I want to be wearing that pair of shoes, right? Well, that's awesome, right? That's the thing that's going to get the kids to the conversation. And once I get them in the conversation, as long as I don't bore them to tears, right? Seriously, right? Then that kid's going to stick.

Yogi Terrell: [00:35:48] Yeah.

Rob Smith: [00:35:48] Yeah.

Joe Brim: [00:35:48] Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:35:48] And that's exactly what we see certainly at Past, is when we pull, you know, those resources together, back to Rob's point, you take the knowledge about what we have to teach and you take the real-world life experience and industry and you put those together, then you won't lose those kids.

Rob Smith: [00:36:07] Yeah. I mean, they're exposed. They start asking questions. And then, the question then becomes, "Well, why cannot apply that coloring to that poster?" And the next thing you know, there is an innovative idea that no one would have even thought of without that type of exposure.

Yogi Terrell: [00:36:21] That's a great point, too, because the youth, they're not—just like you kind of mentioned earlier, they haven't had life shaped for them, you know, because of the years of people telling them how to live and how to think, right? So, they're the ones that are the first disruptors, right?

Annalies Corbin: [00:36:36] Oh, yeah.

Yogi Terrell: [00:36:36] Because they look at things with such open minds. So, the earlier you can expose them to these things, you know, they will play, they will play with their mind. You know, their minds are structured to, "Hey, you know, I don't live by those constructs. I have never even heard of those constructs. So, why couldn't you put A with Z?" Like, "Why can't we put A with Z?" And then, there, you have your innovation.

Annalies Corbin: [00:36:56] Right.

Yogi Terrell: [00:36:56] So, why not tap into that youthful resource, you know, now? Right. That's a good point.

Annalies Corbin: [00:37:00] I tell people all the time that one of the things that I love about the Innovation Lab and the work that we've done and we spend a lot of time working with kids around being their own industry R&D teams, people ask me all the time, "Why on earth would you do that?", right? Because there's so much stuff these kids don't know, they can't truly be an industry R&D team. And I call BS for starters. And part of that is because back to that point, you know, these, in many ways, the kids are way more creative than we are as an adult, right?

Annalies Corbin: [00:37:32] And in part because their lack of life experience, their lack of formalized training and whatever industry we're talking about means they don't come to the problem with a set of constraints in their backpack that say, "I can't mix this color with that color or I can't do X, Y or Z." And because they don't know those things, lots of their ideas may not be actionable, but there are seeds of their ideas that, quite frankly, will save the planet.

Rob Smith: [00:38:00] Absolutely.

Annalies Corbin: [00:38:02] And so, I think that's probably one of the most powerful lessons that I have had the chance to learn from even our own process, but literally sitting down and watching kids when I say, "Here's the problem, go. I'll be back in 10 minutes. Tell me what you think." That's powerful.

Yogi Terrell: [00:38:20] Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:38:20] It's powerful. And the other piece I think that sort of rolls into all of this in the power, is that the belief, and there's no question that everybody sitting around this table today has this same belief that every kid is capable of great things.

Yogi Terrell: [00:38:35] Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:38:35] Without question, no matter what, every kid can, in fact.

Joe Brim: [00:38:42] Yeah. And what's amazing with the PAST Foundation, you are helping the kids recognize ownership. Now, imagine taking ownership of your ability to create and the idea that you're going to move in a certain career path, those ownerships make you accountable. And that keeps you, you know, sustained and committed to whatever calls may be at the end of that.

Annalies Corbin: [00:39:06] Absolutely. It's a journey.

Yogi Terrell: [00:39:08] It is.

Annalies Corbin: [00:39:08] It is a fun journey. So, gentlemen, thank you very, very much for spending time with us today. We're going to circle back around. So, the four of us are going to gather around the table again in about a year.

Rob Smith: [00:39:20] Yes.

Yogi Terrell: [00:39:20] Yeah. This conversation is just getting started.

Annalies Corbin: [00:39:21] And we're going to have an update.

Yogi Terrell: [00:39:23] Yes.

Annalies Corbin: [00:39:23] So, there will be a part two to this conversation.

Joe Brim: [00:39:25] Yes, I love it.

Yogi Terrell: [00:39:27] Me, too.

Annalies Corbin: [00:39:27] Because everybody wants to know, okay, they talked about it, but what did you actually do?

Yogi Terrell: [00:39:31] Do, right. Yeah.

Annalies Corbin: [00:39:32] So, same time next year, we're going to be right back here.

Rob Smith: [00:39:35] Sounds good.

Yogi Terrell: [00:39:36] We'll talk about it.

Annalies Corbin: [00:39:38] Thank you so much.

Rob Smith: [00:39:38] Thank you.

Yogi Terrell: [00:39:39] Thank you. Thank you for having us.

Annalies Corbin: [00:39:42] Thank you for joining us for Learning Unboxed, a conversation about teaching, learning and the future of work. I want to thank my guests and encourage you all to be part of the conversation. Meet me on social media at Annalies Corbin. And join me next time as we stand up, step back and lean in to re-imagine education.