

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Rachel Rodgers

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064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rae: I think when you start learning how to trust your gut like that and then it pays off and every time you step into something bigger and you trust your gut on that you start learning to trust your gut even more with big, scarier risk, and that is powerful.

Rachel: Welcome to the *Hello Seven Podcast*. I'm your host, Rachel Rodgers, wife, mother of four children, a lover of Beyoncé, coffee drinker, and afro-wearer, and I just happen to be the CEO of a seven-figure business. I am on a mission to help every woman I meet become a millionaire. If you want to make more money, you are in the right place. Let's get it going.

Hey ladies and gents, queens and kings, and non-binary royalty. On today's show, I've got a big question that I want you to think on. Here it is. What do you want to be known for? Let me repeat that so you can really let this question sink into your bones. What do you want to be known for? Before you die, what do you want to accomplish? What do you want to contribute to humanity? What is the mark you will leave in your family and your community and the lives of all who have known you, including your clients and your customers? When you pass away and people are gathering to celebrate your life, what kinds of things do you hope they will say about you?

This podcast is all about financial power and building wealth. My mission is to help you make more money, a lot more money. But in order to make serious money, first you have to go back to square one back to the core of it all. You have to decide what do I want to be known for in my industry and in the world? What is the main thing that I want to devote my life, or at least a significant portion of my life to doing?

Serena Williams is known for being a history making tennis bad ass. Yo-Yo Ma is known for playing the cello like an angel from heaven. Shonda

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rhimes is known for creative, addictive, must watch TV shows featuring diverse characters, like Grey's Anatomy and Scandal. In my circle, I'm known for teaching women, especially women of color, how to make a lot more money. So when it comes to your work, your business or whatever you do, right? What do you want to be known for? This is a big question and it's such an important one to answer for yourself. Because if you feel fuzzy on the question, if you're not sure, if you haven't decided or if you're only halfway committed, then you're going to have a tough time building a million-dollar business.

Our guest on today's show is Rae McDaniel. Rae is definitely someone who has decided what they want to be known for and what they stand for. They are clear, and this clarity is shining through every part of their business. If you've never connected with Rae, allow me to roll out the introductions. Rae is a licensed clinical professional counselor and a certified sex therapist. Rae has a master's in counseling from DePaul University and completed a clinical internship with Iraqi, Burmese and Nepali refugees and torture survivors.

Rae also happens to be a clear non-binary person. Meaning, Rae's gender identity is not exclusively masculine or feminine. Rae works with people who are going through some kind of transition in terms of sex, gender, identity, or relationships. Many of Rae's clients are transgender, non-binary or questioning. And Rae's mission is to help people feel confident in their own skin, providing the support they need to go from feeling broken and alone, to whole and part of a community.

I love how Rae is not trying to be the therapist for everyone under the sun, but rather focusing on a specific audience and a specific need. I also love how Rae is not running a traditional therapy practice. They are shaking up the industry and doing things differently, including launching an online

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

community called GenderFck, the club. You know, I love an industry disruptor.

In my conversation with Rae, we talk about all the things. Mental health, how it feels to start making serious money, how to make big leaps in your business before you feel totally ready and of course, how to figure out what you want to be known for. We also discuss a few projects we are determined to complete before we die, lighthearted banter like that. But in all seriousness, even though this episode gets into some deep stuff, I think you'll walk away feeling seriously uplifted and inspired. Rae has been a delightful client to work with over the past few years and I'm so excited to introduce them to all of you. Let's get into it.

All righty, Rae. So, thank you so much for being here.

Rae: I am so excited.

Rachel: To begin I just want to ask you, how are you doing? Because 2020 has been a hot mess express, so are you eating? Are you taking care of yourself? Tell me, how is your year going?

Rae: Well, I feel like that's a loaded question for everybody. Nobody really knows how to answer that. I am eating. That has never stopped. Definitely not a problem for me. I'm doing pretty well. So, I think now I'm doing really well. The summer was a hot mess. I moved into a new house, I had the renovation from hell, and my number two in my business resigned all at the same time and I got a puppy and my basement flooded.

Rachel: Your summer sounds like what's happening for me right now.

Rae: Yep, I completely understand the new house life. So, now I'm doing great especially compared to that.

[Hello Seven](#) with Rachel Rodgers

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rachel: Yes, for sure. Yeah, renovations will really test your personal mettle.

Rae: I didn't know. I had no idea what I was getting myself into. It's my first time doing it. It was an adventure.

Rachel: That's a nice to put it, an adventure.

Rae: Yeah.

Rachel: But other than that, you have recovered from the summer of crazy and the fall is going well?

Rae: I have. Yes, the fall is going great, actually.

Rachel: Yay, I love it. Okay, so what are some of the things that you do to take care of your mental health? What's your weekly take good care of Rae? What's on that list for you?

Rae: Ooh, that's a really good question. So, I think on a higher level, therapy. I have a therapist that I see every week. I could not do without her. I also have a couples therapist. It helps keep me and my partner on straight. Beside that, playing with my puppy. I really enjoy going on walks with her every morning, having my coffee, taking time to wind down at the end of the day.

My partner and I also have a goal to learn how to do the splits by December. So, we're like stretching every night.

Rachel: You're the best. I love this goal.

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rae: Yep, we are just doing some YouTube tutorials. Neither one of us are very good at it, but we're working towards that.

Rachel: And you're bonding, I love it.

Rae: We're bonding. It's great. I take a lot of baths, a lot, a lot of baths, and chill in there for a very, very long time, coloring, watering my plants, very domestic.

Rachel: I love it. So, Rae, your childhood was interesting, to say the least, right?

Rae: You could say that. Yes, it was.

Rachel: So, you are in your own words, the adopted child of fundamentalist Southern Baptist missionary traveling puppeteers.

Rae: Yep, that is correct. Lifetime really, really missed out on a fantastic reality TV show/Lifetime original movie. It is as strange as it sounds.

Rachel: It's like that whole thing was fascinating enough, but then it ends in traveling puppeteers and that's where it really gets interesting.

Rae: Right, exactly. Yes. So, from the time I was 10 years old my family somehow got into puppetry and really ran with it. We got rid of our house when I was 12, we lived in hotels for a little while. We lived in a racecar trailer where my bed and my parents' bed were about six inches away from each other. Then we moved to a motorhome which was a major upgrade. I lived in a motorhome for about four years until I went to college.

Rachel: Wow.

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rae: Yeah.

Rachel: Amazing. Oh my God, so of course you're an entrepreneur, actually.

Rae: Yes. It runs in the family.

Rachel: Okay, so what were your parents like? What do you think compelled them to do puppetry? Were they just the adventurous type? Tell us more about your parents.

Rae: Well, I think they've always been really scrappy. So, they have always been very creative. They built a lot of our first house and have always had that entrepreneurial spirit and they are – I used to be this, but they are very devoutly religious and I have no idea, honestly, how my dad found puppetry and how that happened, but it did and then he really just expanded on it and the entire family took it up and he felt called to be a missionary puppeteer as you do.

Rachel: Wow, fascinating. I have to say, people have no idea how interesting missionaries. It's like a whole different subculture of Christianity.

Rae: Yes. I think they are a subculture of a subculture. It is a bubble and it is a fascinating way to view the world that I don't necessarily resonate with at all anymore, but they just really went for it.

Rachel: Yeah, when I was just out of high school I went on a couple of missions trips and one was to Barbados, one was in Cuenca, Ecuador and the missionaries that we were going to help and support – we spent a week there volunteering and doing really just manual labor and those were fascinating experiences, but the missionaries themselves they were the quickest, oddest people. Also, very generous in a lot of ways. Definitely

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

some really super positive and good people in a lot of ways and also just so strange. You know?

Rae: Yep, that I [inaudible]

Rachel: Just different, I guess different is the word.

Rae: I think that's a really great explanation of my parents and they now live in a tiny home off the grid in Louisiana that is solar-powered that they built.

Rachel: Wow.

Rae: Which tracks.

Rachel: Yes, it tracks. Of all the places that you would say your parents would live Louisiana is not where I would have guessed.

Rae: No? Well, it's where I grew up. They both grew up there, too, and settled there and like living in the swamp.

Rachel: Yeah, because you know why you don't strike me as a southern type of person. You know what I mean?

Rae: No. Yeah. I got out of there as soon as I could. I went to grad school in Chicago, escaped the south as a baby queer, if you will. The south was not super, super kind to me and I really wanted to be around people that I felt more supported by. I was also a theater kid, so I lost my southern accent really young and I know I can't even fake it. It sounds fake if I try it.

Rachel: I believe that, and that makes perfect sense. Maybe that's what it is. I'm like, nothing about you says southern to me.

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rae: That's fair.

Rachel: Oh my God, I love it. I love it. So, I love that, that you found theater and did you study that in school or you just performed whenever you could?

Rae: You know, it's really interesting because I grew up being a traveling puppeteer, I was on stage in front of people four nights a week for five-plus years.

Rachel: Wow. Wait, wait, wait. So, you were homeschooled? Is that what happened?

Rae: Mm-hm, yeah. I started homeschooling when I was 12 and then graduated high school when I was 16, went to college when I was 17, and performed all throughout my high school years four nights a week, I would say probably at least 48 weeks of the year. So, I have a lot of theater in my blood. Then, if you know anything about theater kids, it tends to be a place where queer kids gather.

So, I didn't study theater in college as a major or a minor, but I was also that kid who was in the theater building for no good reason. I was just hanging out there. So, eventually after being in the halls long enough I started taking classes and did a few little minor productions and my best friends in college were the theater kids I think because it was the place where I felt the most accepted and comfortable.

Rachel: Yes, that's exactly what I was going to say. I think the arts is a place where you can kind of – I don't know, there's something about being able to – you're sort of playing someone else, but there's like that creativity and that ability to just connect. I think theater kids, historically, have also been ostracized in some way.

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rae: Oh yeah.

Rachel: The fact that you want to perform, for some reason you're made fun of for that reason.

Rae: Yeah, they tend to be the outcast.

Rachel: Exactly, exactly. Tell me, first of all, I can't wait for your book to come out because clearly you need to write your best-selling book because your childhood alone is like –

Rae: Right? Yeah, I was –

Rachel: Never mind what you've done since then, you know?

Rae: Yeah, it could be its own thing. So, I'm really excited to see what happens with this book.

Rachel: Yes. I'm excited, too. Okay, so what would you like to believe about money? Is there a new belief that you're actively working on right now?

Rae: Yes, that is such a great question. I would like to believe that money comes to me easily and stays with me. Yeah, growing up my family really didn't have a lot of money and they were very scrappy. Then, my grandparents both grew up in the Great Depression era kind of and so they were very frugal. I just never have grown up in a family that had class privilege.

So, getting into a place in my life where I'm inching towards having more class privilege feels new and feels very scary. I would like to move out of

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

that place where money feels scarce to me and I don't feel like I belong as somebody who has money.

Rachel: Yep, I know exactly what you mean and can relate to that completely. I love that you point out class privilege because I think it's so true. I think there's something about that. When you grow up in a scrappy family, in a low-income family and you just – there's a certain pride that comes with that that I don't think a lot of people understand.

I think in this country you can be seen as something is wrong with you or you're lazy or just all kinds of negative connotations with being poor or being low-income, but the reality is is that growing up that way there's a certain in being able to make a dollar out of 15 cents. You can make anything happen with very little money and there's just like a – I don't know. And there's a comradery that comes with it, that connection and it's a beautiful thing.

Rae: Absolutely. I think there's a lot of pride in working hard and putting in a good day's labor. My grandma is probably one of the most creative people I know with money. She can create anything from the dollar store she wants. There is a pride in that.

Rachel: Yes, exactly. I think there's almost like a – I don't know if you experience this, but it's almost like a little bit of a mourning when you're like, "Oh, that identity that I had as a scrappy person who can make anything happen with a dollar," and then you have to become this person who's like, "Actually, no, I should pay for convenience." It's just like, what?

Rae: Yeah, it is a shift. It is a huge, huge shift to think about money as a resource that you need to spend versus needing to just accumulate.

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rachel: Yes, exactly. Like hold on to every dollar that you have and then the more money you make you realize, “Actually, the more I hold on to these dollars the less money I make.”

Rae: Exactly.

Rachel: It’s kind of a mindfuck to be totally honest.

Rae: It is a mindfuck. It totally is. Even thinking back to when I started my business and making \$10,000, \$20,000 a month I was over the moon at that and that’s less than my payroll, a two-week payroll now. I’m like, “What? What is happening?”

Rachel: Exactly. Exactly. And then you just keep doing it. You just keep hiring people and you just keep spending money. It gets a little scary and at a certain point you’re like, “Wait a minute, I’ve spent how much a month to run this business and my life and all of those things?” It is a bizarre thing, but I think – I love pointing that out for our listeners because I’m sure there’s a lot of them that could relate to both of us and that feeling of like, there’s almost a little bit of mourning for that old identity of a working class hustler kind of person and now you’re moving into a place where you’re like – actually, you start to feel like a diva. You know what I mean?

Rae: Oh yeah.

Rachel: You start to feel like, who can I pay to do things for me?

Rae: Yeah, I have not quite a personal chef, but somebody that delivers meals to me and I’m so hesitant to tell people that because it does make me feel like a diva, but it’s one of the best things that I have in my life.

Rachel: Yes.

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rae: But yeah, I think it's important to stay connected to those working-class values. I know, for me, that hustler, that scrappiness, that go to work, work hard, those are still all values that I hold and that still serve me really well, and I never want to be in a place where I am not connected to those values and also people who live that life every day.

Rachel: Yes. Yes, I totally hear you on that. It's interesting. I think the way that we see it the most is like politicians when they're trying to connect to voters and they have no fucking clue. Like the way that they talk about things it's like, "Oh my God, you have either never been poor or like you are completely out of touch with reality." You know?

Rae: Yep, exactly.

Rachel: So, I think we do sometimes have that fear. For me, what keeps me willing to keep going and keep building wealth and keep building success in my own life is that I know it's also creating success for others. Being connected to that why, like why am I here? Why am I doing these things? Because I think otherwise, you'd be like, "Well, I think I'm done. I make enough money, I'm comfortable." But then there's – it's not like, we don't keep marching forward because we want to have a private jet someday, although that's a nice goal, but –

Rae: Sure, I'm down with that.

Rachel: But we probably wouldn't get out of bed every morning for that. But if we know, "I'm making a fucking difference in the world and if I keep growing this business I can touch and connect with and help and heal more people, let me just keep marching forward for that purpose." That's something that'll get your ass out of bed every day.

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rae: Absolutely. I resonate with that so much and I think you actually put it this way, maybe in a previous podcast, but that you are creating an ecosystem around your business and that really resonates with me. I have about 10 employees now and we are creating an ecosystem. Many of those people also hold marginalized identities and the people that I hire as contractors or coaches hold marginalized identities and I want to be able to pay all of those people really well while also being able to serve – we serve 200 to 300 people a month at this point.

Rachel: Yes, that's amazing.

Rae: Yeah, and that feels incredible to be able to provide therapy and coaching services for people that it changes their lives. Being able to do it in a sustainable for me, for my business, for my employees and the people that we're paying to help us do that.

Rachel: Yes, yes, and I think part of the whole point is to change what it means to be a successful person. To change that narrative and that image of a cis-hetero white guy who had this – whatever their story is, but it's always that person and the actions that they take and the actions that get associated with wealthy people, that can all shift and we can give it a different identity or give it a multi-faceted identity, right? Because there's different types of us who are doing this work now and who are willing – I think that's the thing that we don't even question. It's like we have to have a willingness to become wealthy and I think as entrepreneurs it can so uncomfortable to be successful that we sort of push it away or sabotage ourselves, you know?

Rae: Yep, I completely feel that. I think in the queer community, too, there is such an anti-capitalist push and I get that 100% and I subscribe to the fact that capitalism has hurt a lot of people and there's so many thing about that system that absolutely do not work and that actively oppress. Since

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

we're here and we're not getting out of a capitalist system anytime soon, I want to create a new vision for what that looks like. Creating a salary structure for my employees that allows them to take time off when they're getting burned out by being therapists in the middle of a pandemic. That's a lot.

Rachel: Yes. I can only imagine.

Rae: That's so much, and that allows them to be paid well and take time off and really have a culture that supports self-care for people. That is what I want my business to look like and we can't do that if we don't maintain a certain profit margin. That's what keeps me grounded and continuing to build wealth is we are creating a different vision of what business can look like that is supportive, that is collaborative, that values self-care and taking time off, that supports clients in a really profound way. That is what keeps me going in the morning.

Rachel: Yeah. I love that so much and I'm so glad that you brought that up that – I think building a small business is anti-capitalist. It's like, let's decentralize where all the money is. It doesn't need to be at the top 50 companies in the country and with the top 10 billionaires of whatever. Let's redistribute wealth to people of color, to the queer community, to marginalized people, right? And that's part of what the work that we are doing is and I think it's important to keep having these discussions because I think those are the things that stop us when we're like, "Should I keep building? Should I be hiring employees? Should I keep growing this business? Who am I to do this in this fucked up system?" It's like, no, you're reclaiming the system. Let's take it back and turn it into something that works for us.

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rae: Exactly. There's research out there that when marginalized populations have money, they distribute that money to the community. We know that.

Rachel: That's right. Yes. Exactly, which is exactly why we need to be doing this work. It's a necessity because that's the only way we're going to change it because it's one thing to say we hate capitalism and we hate what it's become and what it's done to this country and what it's done to so many of our people. At the same time, what is the solution? I don't want to just rail against the system that doesn't work, I want to come with solutions and better options and act on those options.

I think the work that you're doing, Rae, the work that I'm doing it's a form of activism. Those two things could be intertwined.

Rae: Absolutely it is.

Rachel: Yeah.

Rae: Yeah, I believe that.

Rachel: Absolutely. Okay, so my next question is you identify as a non-binary person -

Rae: I do.

Rachel: And from what I understand non-binary means that your gender identity is not exclusively masculine or feminine.

Rae: Yep, you got it.

Rachel: So, what does the term non-binary mean to you?

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rae: So, if you think about the system of binary genders that we have, so we think a baby comes out of the womb, the doctor says, “It’s a boy,” or, “It’s a girl,” and those are the only two options and what we know now from research is that there’s actually a vast number of people who have some sort of difference in sexual development that are roughly amount of people in the world who are redheads which is wild.

Rachel: Wow. That is wild. It’s like denying all the people who say they’re redheads. It’s like, “No, you’re blonde or you’re brunette.” No, they’re not.

Rae: Exactly. If we created a taxonomy of hair colors that left out redheads that would feel ridiculous because there are so many redheads, but what we’ve done is we’ve created binary system of gender that is actually not based in scientific fact. We know that there are way more differences in sexual development than that, so I think that is the foundation of this conversation.

Rachel: Yes.

Rae: Building on that, gender identity is really about how you identify your gender on the inside. What non-binary means is that I was assigned female at birth, I grew up, that didn’t really feel like it fit. I describe it as maybe a shoe that is one size too small. You can walk around in it, it’s fine, but after a while you start getting blisters unless you put on a shoe that fits better. That is what a non-binary identity has felt like to me is that I don’t identify as male at all, but female as a box that I am put in felt way too constricting.

Being non-binary and using they/them pronouns has really allowed me to expand into the most authentic version of myself and express that self to the world in a way that feels way more fitting and authentic to me.

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rachel: Yes, that is so beautiful and I love it. When you were talking – I don't know if this a worthy comparison, but it makes me think about myself as a woman and I identify with woman or female, but at the same time there have been so many times in my life where I felt like I wasn't feminine enough because I'm not a super girly girl. You know what I mean?

Rae: Yeah, I sure do.

Rachel: That sort of loving dresses and make-up and all that. I was the kid that played in the dirt, I wanted to make shit, I wanted to roughhouse. I still, to this day, I get dressed up for photo shoots and if I have event, but most days I look like this and y'all can't see me, but I'm in a t-shirt and sweatpants that I slept in and then decided to work in today. So, that's what's happening right now.

I feel like there's so many degrees and this whole that you can be a woman and this is what that looks like or you can be a man and this is what that looks like. There are so many degrees of how you can express yourself and it's so limiting.

Rae: It is. It really is. Everything is a spectrum and I really and truly believe that if we break down these binary gender boxes everybody will be better off. Everybody will have more freedom; they won't feel like they're not enough of any particular thing. They will just be themselves.

Rachel: Yes.

Rae: And be allowed to play with gender which is – I love that. Gender and gender expansion should be celebrated across the board for everyone. Cis which means that you identify with the sex that you were assigned at birth or trans or non-binary, gender expansion is for everybody.

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rachel: Yes. So, what you shared previously, it's rooted in science, right?

Rae: Yes.

Rachel: Scientifically, we're doing it wrong.

Rae: Yes.

Rachel: Why the fuck are we fighting science? Why can't we just let that shit go? What do you think is the problem here as to why we can't just like – why more people aren't just like, "Yeah, whatever your identity is, I'm good with that." I do think it's expanding, but clearly there's so much work to be done. Why do you think it's hard for people to accept?

Rae: I have a theory about that.

Rachel: I want to hear this theory.

Rae: Yes. So, over time science has been fought against tooth and nail. If you think way back in the day the people who said, "Hey, there's this thing called gravity that affects us all," and the people who said, "The Earth is round," and the people who said, "Everything that you see is made up of these tiny little particles called atoms and they never die," those people were completely oppressed.

They were the scientists of the day, they were thrown in jail, they were excommunicated, some of them were burned at the stake and the reason I think that happened then and that that is happening now when it comes to breaking down the gender binary is it really shakes up people's fundamental views of what the world is and that is scary. When we shake these very deep beliefs of this is how the world works, I know this for sure, you introduce uncertainty and you introduce possibility, yes, but that

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

uncertainty is very, very scary for people and they react really strongly against it and sometimes very violently against it. I think that that is what we are seeing with the backlash against trans individuals and the violence against trans individuals is it shakes people's fundamental views and that scares them.

Rachel: Yeah, it's true and it's like – do you feel like – I'm curious to hear from you as a therapist, do you feel compassion for people who are afraid of change in that way? Or do you just want to punch them in the face? Or maybe it's both.

Rae: Maybe a little bit of both sometimes. I think the difference between wanting to punch them in the face and having compassion are the people who are really open to it. So, obviously the people who are reacting with violence I want to punch in the face more. But the people who are just a little confused, don't quite understand it, maybe are afraid of something new, but also open to it those people absolutely I have compassion for that.

This is a big thing to wrap your head around. It is a lot of new language, a lot of new concepts. It is a lot to take in and that can take some time. That is understandable.

Rachel: Yeah, I think about learning a new language and people are so afraid – like, I took my mother to France and she wouldn't say, "Bonjour" or, "Bonsoir," and I'm just like, "Just try." But she felt silly using different language and I feel like there's a little bit of that that goes on too with pronouns and not wanting to get it wrong and just fucking it up and being embarrassed when you fuck it up. I think that almost creates the resist – like, this embarrassment or this fear of getting it wrong makes people just run to the old way, you know what I mean? And just not willing to be open and accepting of something new and different and like, yes, it's a different way of talking and fucking get over it, it's not that serious.

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rae: And that's the thing, you can fuck up. Let me just take that off of everybody's worry list. You are going to fuck up because this is new, because maybe you have known somebody by a certain name and pronouns and now that has to shift. Maybe there is language and pronouns that are unfamiliar to you. You're not going to get perfect 100% of the time and that's okay. Just apologize, correct yourself, move on, and get over it. It's okay.

Rachel: Yes, and I think what I hear you saying, Rae, is giving a shit goes a long way and we have to understand that our fucking inconvenience of having to use different pronouns is not more important than recognizing the identity and the humanity of another person. That matters so much fucking more and my sort of philosophy really on any oppressed people is let's support each other in doing whatever we have to do to get free, period, right?

Rae: Yes.

Rachel: So, if you as a non-binary person tell me, "Hey, this is what I need to get free," then I need to just be like, "Absolutely."

Rae: A hundred percent.

Rachel: Unless you're basically saying, "I need to harm myself," other than that I'm 100% supportive of you doing what you got to do to get free and I ask you the same for myself and for all identities. This is the philosophy that we just need to have and recognize. We don't necessarily understand the nuance of everybody's different experience, but we can just hear what they're saying and support them in doing what they need to do to get free.

Rae: Yeah, I love how you put that. There is so much power in just simply listening to what someone needs and doing that thing.

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rachel: Yes.

Rae: It's really a simple, simply concept, and I always – I really love saying to everybody, discomfort is not harm. Making yourself uncomfortable to help someone else get free is not harming you, but not doing that thing is harming someone else.

Rachel: Exactly.

Rae: You can't compare the two. You have to make yourself uncomfortable if it helps somebody else's freedom.

Rachel: Yes, exactly. And I think this is the beauty of the it, like this enables all of us to get free as long as we're willing to do those uncomfortable things. We're going to ask each other to be uncomfortable in certain ways in relation to however we've been oppressed or marginalized in our society. The more we do that the more open we all become and the more this, hopefully, becomes a conversation we no longer need to have because we're all being treated equally or with equity.

Rae: A hundred percent. I mean, that's intersectionality. We all are working together to create freedom for everyone. That's the point of it all.

Rachel: Exactly, and it's not like we hate every cis-straight white guy, it's just like they're the only ones that have the freedom that we should all have.

Rae: Exactly.

Rachel: So, it's like we don't hate you, we want you to have your freedoms, too, but we all need to get free. People think that creating that equity means that you're taking their freedom. That's not the same. Me taking –

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

it's not even taking anything. It's just asking for the same things that you have.

Rae: You're not taking anything.

Rachel: Exactly.

Rae: Freedom is not a pie. You can't take it away from someone else by giving someone more freedom.

Rachel: Exactly. It's like thought of in our society, I think, by a lot of people as a zero-sum game and it's like, no, no, no, we can win. We can all have our own motherfucking pie.

Rae: Exactly, there's plenty of pie to go around. Do not worry.

Rachel: Enjoy your pie and I'll enjoy mine.

Rae: Exactly.

Rachel: Okay, so you're a therapist. So, some therapists run a pretty general practice meaning you work with a wide range of people on a wide range of topics, but that's not you.

Rae: It is not.

Rachel: You primarily work with LGBTQ+ folks and you specialize in working with people who are navigating a transition: gender transition, identity transition, maybe a relationship transition. At what point did you decide, "This is what I want to specialize in, this is my thing"?

Rae: From day one of grad school.

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rachel: I love it.

Rae: Yeah, so when I went to undergrad it was at a very tiny, little liberal arts college in the woods of East Texas and I told you that all of my friends were the theater kids and I watched several of them come out in this really oppressive environment and how damaging that was to them and how hard it was. I was already in the psychology world in undergrad so I decided that I wanted to be a therapist and I wanted to work with the LGBTQ population. So, I moved to Chicago, started grad school. The head of the department that I was in was an out, lesbian woman and I went to her probably the first week of grad school and said, "This is what I want to do. How do I get there?"

She gave me some really good advice, ways to boost my resume, and I focused every single paper, every project, every internship, every training that I did on working towards working with the LGBTQ population and I contacted one of the local LGBTQ group practices in town and said, "I will do anything you want, just hire me."

Rachel: I love it.

Rae: She said, "No," which was fine, but nine months later she called me and said, "Hey, I'm opening an office. I need somebody to help out with some admin things in the office," so I said, "I am there." I filled the coffee, I did the filing, and I kept going to the head of this company saying, "Hey, you don't actually have marketing people. You don't actually have this operations thing. Let me take that off your plate. Let me take that off your plate."

When I joined it was a 5-person practice in a 3-suite office and five years later when I left it was a 20-person practice with 2 different offices and I was the COO of the company.

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rachel: Wow.

Rae: Yeah, and I was 27, I think, at that –

Rachel: Amazing.

Rae: Yeah, so I just really grew with that and grew my skills with that. Along the way as a therapist as well as the COO I discovered that I really, really loved working with sexuality-related topics. So, I became a certified sex therapist and trans individuals. As this tends to happen in my life, my career really preceded my own identity development.

So, after working with trans folks for a while it kind of dawned upon me, maybe part of the reason that you like working with trans folks is that you are trans. So, that happened along the way and something about the way that I work trans folks and my personality and how I do therapy really lends itself to helping people imagine more possibilities for themselves than they would have otherwise imagined. I think that is kind of the secret sauce of my work with trans individuals is I'm a very futuristic thinker if you look at my Gallup strengths.

I can help them really dig into the life that they want to create for themselves and then very compassionately challenge them to make those moves in a pace in a way that feels really good for them.

Rachel: Yes. I think that was so smart of you to establish yourself in a therapy practice where you could really learn the ins and outs of how to run that kind of business so that when you started your own you had all of that knowledge. You worked in the Operations Department, the Marketing Department, you know what the admin work looks like and I think that that's so key.

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

I love that you have such a powerful niche and that you're helping people with something that – this is a population that is sorely underserved and just like I think the idea that you can transition in a way that's beautiful and positive and it doesn't have to be this miserable experience. That is radical. You know?

Rae: It is radical and it so counter to the narrative that I think we hear of a kid that was shamed for gender non-conforming behavior when they were young, they repress it, puberty happens, it's full of angst and anxiety and suffering and then the entire process has to be full of this suffering and angst and anxiety and self-doubt. That is certainly some people's story, and I don't want to minimize that, and the idea that it is necessary to hate yourself and to be full of suffering along the entire transition journey, I think that's bullshit.

Rachel: Yes.

Rae: There are other ways to do it that really focus on strengths, that focus on self-growth, that are full of curiosity and celebration and discovery and transitioning in a way that also impacts all of these other areas of your life in really profound ways because I think once you decide, "Hey, I am going to be my authentic self in this one area of my life," and you start building boundaries around that and assertiveness and you start refusing to have a life that doesn't feel like that the rest of the aspects of your life start to catch up to that really naturally because you're then unwilling to accept having that incongruence in these other areas of your life, too.

So, I see clients who make not only a transition in their gender, but a transition in a ton of aspects of their life. Getting into relationships, getting out of toxic relationship, new jobs, promotions, creativity, playing a musical instrument, starting a band, moving into a living situation that feels really

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

good for them. It is a whole life transformation and not just something that's just about this tiny aspect of your life which is gender.

Rachel: Right. Yes. I love that and I agree with you. I've seen that so often with people starting businesses or taking more control of their health or any kind of – it's like, you shift one thing and then everything shifts in a more positive way because when you make that one change you're like, "Oh, all of these changes are possible."

Rae: Mm-hm, it's a snowball.

Rachel: Yes, it is which I absolutely love. So, you have taken a bunch of big leaps in your business. Just one example is within three months of opening your solo practice you decided to hire another therapist to join your practice.

Rae: Yep, I did.

Rachel: Which most entrepreneurs do not do, let me tell you. Most entrepreneurs wait years before they're willing to take the plunge into hiring people to join your team. And you also signed a lease, right, for the location which is another scary thing that a lot of people don't want to do. So, tell me a little bit more about making those big leaps. Were you confident when you did that? Were you terrified? Were you sweating from head to toe? What did you have to say to yourself to convince yourself to go for it?

Rae: Oh, I was scared shitless, but that has never stopped me in my life and it didn't stop me in this way either. When I was trying to open my just solo private practice my real estate agent found a space that was a 10-minute walk from my house and instead of one office, it was a storefront with three offices and a waiting room and the price was right. So, I signed a four-year lease saying, "Well, let's see what happens here."

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

So, I had a giant space and I'm using one office in it and my thought was, "I'll rent out the other offices," or something like that and then within three months someone had emailed me and wrote me a two-page email about these are all the reasons that you should hire me as a therapist at your practice.

Rachel: Wow.

Rae: Yeah, and she made a good point.

Rachel: Talk about scrappy, right? That's your people.

Rae: Exactly, and it really reminded me of my start, too, writing that person. I'm like, "You know what, I'm going to give somebody else this chance that somebody gave me." From there she got full super quick and we started talking about hiring more people, we had the space for it and every year that we've existed which is now two and a half years we have doubled or tripled our business. So, it has been really scary.

I remember setting up the entire office and then sitting down on my couch and being like, "What have I done?"

Rachel: Listen, it's only right. You're not doing the right thing if you're not having a, "What the fuck have I done" moment, you know?

Rae: Yes.

Rachel: It's like you get all in there, you take all the risk, you do all the things and then you're like, "What have I done?"

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rae: Yep. Rachel, I think you say this, too, of if a goal doesn't make you want to puke or a move doesn't make you want to puke it might not be big enough. I was in the puke sphere for sure.

Rachel: Yeah, the puke zone.

Rae: The puke zone.

Rachel: Vomit goals.

Rae: Yep, hashtag, 100%. I think every big leap in my business has made me want to puke a little bit and that's kind of my cue that okay, well maybe this is the move that you should be making. The way I like to think about it is are you jumping out of a plane with or without a parachute? Without a parachute, obviously, that's a problem, but with a parachute your brain and your body don't know the difference. Your body is still going to say, "What the fuck are you doing jumping out of a plane?" Even though you are safe.

So, one phrase I was taught is, you are safe even though you don't feel like you are safe. That has been a guiding principle of assessing, am I safe? What is the worst that's going to happen here? That's an important piece of it. Then, if your body is reacting to a situation that isn't going to involve death or dismemberment, you're probably okay and you can go for it.

Rachel: That reminds me, last week I went ziplining for the first time with my kids. So, not only was I terrified for myself, but I was terrified for my children. I'm like, "What am I doing? Why am I letting my kids do this?" Then you have that moment as a Black person I feel like you just have that moment of like, "This is what white people do, this is not for Black people. Why are you letting these white people take you up here and have you jump off shit?"

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rae: Did you love it?

Rachel: I loved it. But first of all, you put on all the equipment and you're like, "Oh shit, this is real." And then they did take us on a little test line on the ground, so you can just get a feel for what it feels like to sit back in your whatever the things you're strapped into is.

Rae: In the harness.

Rachel: Yes, the harness, exactly, but you get up on that – there's something about jumping off of a surface that is high up that you're like, "Why am I doing this?" Then, it's like all you – they said, I loved what they said. They're like, basically, they said they're treetop therapists is what they call themselves because they got to coax to jump off.

Rae: That's so accurate.

Rachel: Yes, and so they said like, all you need is two seconds of courage. That's what they said.

Rae: Oh, I love that. I really love that.

Rachel: Isn't that beautiful? Just two seconds of courage to jump off and you'll know that you're held and then you can have some fun. Of course, you jump off in the first five seconds you're like, "Ahh," and then you're like, "Wee!"

Rae: "What have I done?"

Rachel: Yes, exactly. Then, the next one is less scary and then by the time you get to end you're screaming and hollering and hooting and having so much fun.

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rae: And you want to do it again.

Rachel: Exactly. That's what that reminds me of and I think that's what probably everybody needs is just that two seconds of courage to sign that lease, to say yes to hiring that person and trusting yourself to figure it out along the way.

Rae: That's so key.

Rachel: Yes.

Rae: So, so key. The more that you take those risks and you have those two seconds of courage moments the more you trust yourself that you can have those two seconds of courage and it's going to pay off, and you're going to be fine and you do get to that "Wee" moment and then you just want to do it again.

Rachel: Yes, exactly. Every single time like jumping off of that first one which was like a pretty easy zipline gave me courage to jump off the next one which was longer or higher up. That's what you're doing. You're just sort of building up your tolerance to take those risks, to be more expansive. There's something really beautiful, too, Rae, about you renting that large office and just being like, "Fuck it, let's see what happens. The price is right."

It's almost like you created space, you created physical space for your business to grow and I feel like just energetically that just creates growth.

Rae: Yeah, I love that.

Rachel: Instead of thinking of it as like, "Let me just get this little office. Let me just be small. Let me just do this little thing. Let me just price low."

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

There's so many different ways that we're like, "Let me just be as small as possible," and I think when you make a decision to say, "No, let's be big," then just all kinds of possibilities – it's like with me with buying this ranch. I don't know why the fuck I bought a 50-acre property. I don't know what I'm doing.

Rae: That's okay. It's going to be great. [inaudible] it creates that space that you need to grow into it.

Rachel: Exactly.

Rae: I think a piece of that is taking advantage of those opportunities when they are put in front of you and that's what happened with this realtor is I could've said, "No, that space is too big," or, "I don't really need that." But I looked at it and I said, "This is an opportunity to step into something bigger even though I don't know how it's going to end. There's a reason that this was put in front of me and I should do this." Because who knows what opportunities will come from stepping into something bigger even if you don't know the outcome.

Rachel: Exactly. And you don't even know why. I think there's a big part of this that's really instinctual, right? Where you're just like, "This feels right." That's how I felt the moment I first stepped in this property like February of 2020, so pre-pandemic, and I was just like I knew that I was meant to own this property. I have no idea why. I didn't know what I was supposed to be doing with it, but I was like, "This just feels right," so I'm just following it.

Then you figure it out as you go, right? Then you realize all the reasons why you needed to say yes to this.

Rae: I think when you start learning how to trust your gut like that and then it pays off and every time you step into something bigger and you trust your

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

gut on that you start learning to trust your gut even more with big, scarier risk. That is powerful.

Rachel: It is. It is. I think what you've just pointed out for me, too, is just how powerful it is to just trust yourself. Trusting yourself is super incredibly powerful. No matter who your mentors are or coaches are or therapist is or whatever, you know. You intuitively know and if you just hone that voice and learn to really listen to yourself it's not going to steer you wrong. Sometimes, too, you might listen to your instincts and – my husband always points this out, it might take you down a path that was hard, but you had to learn those lessons. Whatever you were getting out of that it was an important part of your journey to get you to the next level.

That doesn't mean – for example, you bought a house and then you had a renovation from hell, right?

Rae: I was just thinking about that. That is exactly it. I walked into this little house and immediately felt a connection to it and then I brought my friends here and they were like, "I don't know." But I did trust my gut and then it was really hard. We had the renovation from hell, our basement flooded with sewage, and all within a two-month time period and it was a lot, and it was really hard and now I'm sitting on the other side of that loving where I live and having it really feel like home. It was worth it even though in the middle of it I definitely had those moments where I sat down on the couch and I'm like, "What have I done?"

Rachel: Yes, but now you have that gorgeous bathroom with that gorgeous green tile and that fabulous tub.

Rae: Yes, that I am in so many times a week. It is my happy place.

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rachel: Yes, entrepreneurs, if there's one investment you need to make it's a fabulous tub because you just work out all the things, you let your mind rest, and relax. There's so much goodness that comes out of taking a hot tub.

Rae: Highly recommend.

Rachel: Totally. Okay, so one thing I really love about you is you're not interested in doing business as usual. You do things in your own distinctive way. For instance, I know that you've put a lot of thought and care into the physical space of your clinic, right? So, the office is full of plants, you've got coffee and tea, and beautiful furniture and portraits of nude trans and non-binary folks on the walls which I absolutely love that, magazines that feature queer folks and people of color, and you even have a signature fragrance in the air.

Rae: I do. I'm a bit of a design nerd, so when I wanted to open an office one thing that I learned working in mental health is that the office for therapists are generally an afterthought. I walked into offices that the coasters were just a close-up photo of their chihuahua's face. That's a true story.

Rachel: What does that have to do with anything?

Rae: Great question. There's little cheesy quotes that are on the walls and it's just an afterthought and I wanted my clients to have better than that. I wanted them to walk into the space and immediately the second that they walked into the space it felt like a healing ritual for them. So, I make everybody take their shoes off at the beginning of the space –

Rachel: Ooh, I love that.

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rae: I have slippers, so they curl up on the couches which is very –

Rachel: Oh my God! Yes!

Rae: I love it so much and I partnered with a local flower shop and just kind of shop shop that is the most beautiful flower shop that I know of, it's called Asrai Garden and I connected with the owner of that who was an acquaintance of mine and she helped me design the space. It is stunningly beautiful, and I have one of the fragrances from that shop that is the only fragrance that we burn. It's an incense thing so that when people smell that they then immediately come into that ritual. Smell is such an important sense and can really transport you and I have really good coffee and tea and the photos on the wall were taken by a friend of mine that it was the first art exhibit that I went to when I moved to Chicago 10 years ago.

Years later I became friends with the person who shot that piece and those photos were in their attic and –

Rachel: Wow!

Rae: Yeah, and they let me have them and just kind of borrow them for the space and I've had people walk in there and look at these nude photos of trans and gender queer individuals and cry because they've never seen people that looked like them in photos like that.

Rachel: Yes, and can you imagine, they were in an attic instead of being on a wall somewhere changing people's lives.

Rae: Yep. It was a very serendipitous, beautiful thing and I also have a ton of other sex-positive things in there. One of my most prized possessions is a dildo in a glass case that is sitting on my bookshelf. It was a gift from a group that I ran for two years of trans individuals and my going away

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

present was this purple dildo that they all signed and it says, “We will miss you,” along the bottom of the base of it and it’s in this glass case in my office. So, things like that I love it.

Rachel: Yes, I think that’s so beautiful and you’re really speaking to how you’re developing a brand, right? Like, you’re saying not only do you deserve a beautiful transition, but you deserve a beautiful space to talk about this, to work it out and to receive therapy. I think there’s so much thoughtfulness that you can bring and it makes me think about people who are always are fighting against scaling a business and the reality is that there’s a lot of beauty that you can bring into the experience in the process of scaling.

Just like being able to afford beautiful design and art on the walls and things like that. Having the space and time to think about creating that, you know what I mean, like all of that stuff is possible because of scaling. It’s a positive from it.

Rae: Absolutely.

Rachel: I love that.

Rae: And being able to collaborate with people, too. When you scale you have the capital to collaborate with your dream people and that’s just fun.

Rachel: Yes, it is. It is fun. I love it. Okay, so you are on track to earn a million dollars in revenue and when do you anticipate that you’re going to hit that milestone?

Rae: 2021.

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rachel: I love it. That's so amazing. So, you're two and a half years in, and do you mind telling us what your recurring revenue level is now?

Rae: It's about 70 to 80K a month and we just – we're almost at 600K in yearly revenue this year.

Rachel: I love it.

Rae: I think we'll probably hit that this month.

Rachel: That is so amazing. Two and a half years in, you guys.

Rae: It is possible. It is possible. That three-year timeline is real. If you plan three years, I really believe that you can scale vastly in that amount of time.

Rachel: Yes, and 80K months, that's a million-dollar run rate, right? So, like over the next 12 months you're going to hit that million before 2021. You'll probably do more than a million. You'll probably do at least 1.2 in 2021 if not a little bit more.

Rae: Cross my fingers, that would be great. I'll take it.

Rachel: I love it, and I really want to point out that part of what you've done to hit is being expansive, being open to change. When things get hard and you feel resistant and you want to just contract you don't let yourself do that. And that is so key and that's something that I think is really particular to you, Rae, because I see a lot of my other clients that they're just like the more they fight the change and the more fear that they let run things the slower that growth is going to be.

Rae: Yes, and I think this also circles back around to that class privilege talk. I don't have a back-up plan. I don't have family with money. I'm not

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

inheriting anything at all. There's not money sitting in an account for a wedding or a down payment from my parents. I don't have a partner who's bringing home a ton of money. We're both therapists. So, this is my plan. I don't have an option to not just continue and I think there is some power in not having a back-up plan and being all-in and just going for it. Any setback you just have to deal with it because you don't have a choice. You have to keep moving forward. There's a lot to be said for that.

Rachel: Yes. I tell my clients all the time, "If you have no money to start up with, great." I almost prefer it because if you have money – a lot of money at the very beginning you're just going to spend it on the wrong shit anyway because you just have no idea what you even need that early on, but there's something – it's that scrappiness that you're speaking of and that not having a plan B. My fallback plan basically was like, if this doesn't work I have to go work for a law firm and that sounds like my worst fucking nightmare so I have to make this work.

Rae: I understand. I have had an intuitive reader sit down with me, look at me for 30 seconds and say, "Oh honey, you should never work for anyone else." That is a true story.

Rachel: Yes, I call it unemployable. Where you're just not capable of being an employee.

Rae: I resonate with that quite a bit, but I started my business with \$20,000 on a credit card and that was it. I just did what I had to do.

Rachel: Yes, and for a brick and mortar business that's not a lot. A brick and mortar business requires upfront cost and set-up and yeah, like it can be scary also swiping that card and putting \$20,000 on it.

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rae: It was not easy. That was sitting down on the couch and what have I done moment, but I paid it off I think in six to nine months, it was less than a year.

Rachel: Yes. It's amazing how that happens. I love it. Okay, so what are three things you are going to do to celebrate once you hit that million-dollar mark? Tell us your celebration plan.

Rae: Well, obviously, popping a bottle of champagne that is number one. What else am I going to do? I haven't actually thought about this. I would love to take a trip. Take a vacation from my business once I hit that amount and really go all out. That would be phenomenal. I think the other thing is just having the people I love around me, celebrating with my friends. That's just it, celebrating with my friends, traveling, popping a bottle of champagne and just sitting in that celebration for a moment which I'm not always good at doing. I am a what is the next thing kind of person and I am trying to learn how to slow down and actually celebrate those wins. It is still a work in progress.

Rachel: Yes, I remember that. I used to be very bad at that, too. Now, I'm definitely celebration-focused.

Rae: I'm looking to develop that skill.

Rachel: Yes, and we could all do better. We can always get better at celebrating ourselves and what we've accomplished. Okay, so one question I have for you is, in your own words, what do you want to be known for?

Rae: I want to be known as the person who shows trans individuals that you can transition your gender with less suffering and more ease and it can

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

actually be a process of curiosity, discovery, self-growth, instead of a process that is full of anxiety and self-doubt.

Rachel: I love that. Beautiful. Okay, another question, I recently published an article that was like a fill-in-the-blank statement. Before I die I, will, how would you fill in that blank? And it could be anything, fun things, it could be professional things you want to accomplish and you can give me more than one if you want.

Rae: Yeah, since I was a little, little kid I have always wanted to write a book. That has been on my life dream list since I was 5. That is a thing that I will do before I die, for sure.

Rachel: I love that.

Rae: On the personal side, I would really like to spend more time traveling and see the world more than I have. It really makes me feel alive to just be in different cultures experiencing different places, seeing beautiful places. I want to do that a lot more in my lifetime.

Rachel: I love that. I think you'll probably be doing both of those things in the next, I don't know, 12 months or so.

Rae: I really hope so. At least one of them, I hope. We'll see how the pandemic works with traveling.

Rachel: Exactly. And you can combine that, which is what I did. I traveled to write and that wound up being a great experience. Sometimes it's easier to just escape your real life and focus on a big project, so I love that. Okay, so if there's someone out there listening to this and that person feels like, I don't know what I want to be known for or I'm not sure, I don't feel clear, what advice would you give that person?

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rae: Follow your curiosity. Now, our guts know a lot and if you just naturally follow the things that you are curious about and that light you up and meet the right people meaning follow that curiosity, find the other people who are also curious about that thing, that will lead you on the right path. I truly believe that.

Rachel: I love that and I love how you put that, follow your curiosity. Some advice I give is follow your jealousy.

Rae: That's a good one, too.

Rachel: Yeah, like what makes you feel jealous? Or what – you see someone and they're living a certain life and you're jealous and you wish you could live that life, too, follow that because maybe that's just pointing out what you want, but I love the curiosity as well. So good. Okay, so tell people where can they find you and work with you and all the things?

Rae: Yeah, you can find me at Practical Audacity on all social medias, www.practicalaudacity.com or you can find me at genderfck.club with no "U" because we are polite.

Rachel: I love that. Genderfck.club and we'll link all of that up to the show notes. Okay, last question, let's end with a fun one. What's something that's bringing you joy lately?

Rae: My puppy. I am thrilled to have a dog. I have wanted a dog for so long and she's ridiculous and perfect and I love her.

Rachel: Again, following that curiosity, right? Something you've always wanted and you just made it happen. Love it. Thank you so much, Rae. This has been amazing.

064 What Do You Want To Be Known For with Rae McDaniel

Rae: Thank you for having me. This was so fun.

Rachel: Awesome.

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