

Transcription for Now That's What I'm Talking About Special Kwanzaa Episode

Hear my perspective on society and other topics affecting black America. I'll have commentary interviews from everyday people on current events, politics, black history, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, technology and entertainment.

This is a special Kwanzaa episode for December 29th 2007.

I'd like to welcome you to the *Now that's what I'm talking about* podcast, a podcast where everyone has a voice. I'm your host Theo Johnson.

If you are a new listener I just wanna thank you for joining me and to my returning listeners, thank you so much for listening and for your support. As always if there's anything you'd like to comment about mentioned on this show, please call me on my voicemail hotline at 972-464-1899 or you could shoot me an email podcast@theojohnson.net.

As I mentioned earlier this is a special show that I'm doing for you. I was asked by J.W Richards of the Mandrake society radio podcast to participate in his Kwanzaa episodes and I just wanna thank J.W so much for including me in his group of podcasters. Every year he does this and he has different podcasters take on one principal of Kwanzaa and so he asked me to take on the fourth principle which is Ujamaa. And Ujamaa means cooperative economics and it means to come together to build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and to profit from them together.

I found a site where they had a couple of affirmations related to Ujamaa and they are "I will reach out to others with cooperation, I will try my best to prepare myself for financial exchanges with others and look forward to positive exchange with each event. I will use my talents in cooperation with the talents of others so that we may prosper."

Now I thought this was really interesting and I was really excited when he asked me to do this principal of Ujamaa because I am an entrepreneur and that's one of the things that I'm really trying to do. So when coming out with my idea on how I wanted to build this show, I was like what can I do, what can I do to uh, you know do something that J.W's listeners will wanna hear and something that will be of interest to everyone.

So what I did was, I got with some entrepreneur friends of mine and we put together a group podcast. I was here in Dallas, another was in Houston, another was in Atlanta, Georgia and then another was in Nairobi, Kenya. One of the main goals for this show was to show how Ujamaa could apply to our local businesses and to the global market as well.

Now we did have a couple of connection problems in our conference call, but I did try to make everyone as clear as possible. So let's get started and I'll see you on the other side.

Before we get started with the intros though, I did want to thank everyone for joining. I know we all have different schedules and we're in different time zones so I really appreciate it. One of the first things that I wanna do is...let's start off with the intros. First with Benin and then Mugure and then Martin.

BENIN: Well thank you too, Theo, I really appreciate the opportunity to participate in this podcast. My name is Benin, Benin Brown online I often go by Benin Mwangi. Which Mwangi is spelt M-W-A-N-G-I and my background is in credit, commercial credit and my professional and other interests are in Africa. I've been over doing business in Africa and entrepreneurship and really how to empower entrepreneurs in different parts of Africa when it comes to providing opportunities outside of the continent. So right now I do that through a company called African Path. And you can find that company by going to www.africanpath.com and I also write about entrepreneurship in Africa on beninmwangi.com which is spelled [www. b-e-n-i-n-m-w-a-n-g-i.com](http://www.b-e-n-i-n-m-w-a-n-g-i.com).

MUGURE: Thank you very much, Theo, for having me on the show. My name is Mugure Mugo, I run Preciss International which is an outsourcing company based in Kenya in East Africa. We provide services to US companies and also to UK companies. We provide contact centre services, we're also a data processing company and we also do captioning and subtitling. So, Theo, thank you very much, I'm very happy to be participating in the show.

MARTIN: My name is Martin Hodges I work out of the city of Houston and the name of my company is Local entrepreneurship and development company. We provide business development solutions for small businesses ranging from grants and business planning to web development and technology. But recently also along with Theo, I've launched a magazine called *LiberateMagazine.com* where we highlight entrepreneurs that are primarily in their first five years of business. And the focus of the magazine is to tell the stories of those people who are just starting out. I look forward to the podcast and, Theo, thanks for allowing me to join in on this conversation.

THEO: No problem at all, man, I appreciate you guys taking your time out of your schedules. One of the first things that I really wanted to cover was...Martin, me and you we're school friends. You know we've been friends for a while and, when did we actually get started with this? We kinda got together just out of the blue kinda and decided that we're gonna use both of our businesses to kinda work together. What I'm kinda wanting to do too, is I want to explain the process...the principle of Ujamaa, it means cooperative economics. And what we do is...it means to come together and build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and the profits from them together. And I feel that's kinda what me and you started doing a while back. You know I know I've benefited from my relationship, you know, you have the sales part and I was kinda taken on the technology part and I've learnt a lot from you just from sales and just different techniques that I could use. And I was wondering, just get some feedback from you on, you know that's one of the ways that I've benefited from it but I was wondering, have you benefited from that relationship in either way?

MARTIN: It's actually increased my business tremendously. Like you were saying, Theo, we came together and I think it started when... I remember we were having a conversation about our businesses and you said, "You know what, why don't we just band together and partner on certain projects because we are small businesses so it'll give us that big business feel to have that network in place" And when you said that, we started doing it and it's grown my business in the respect of having that technical support that I wasn't as strong technically as you are and the sales side like you were saying that was my strength so when we brought the sales together and the technical together every time I make a sale you get a sale and it's vice versa, you know. We have that support network in place. But I think what it does for a small business is it gives you that type of network where you can compete at the same level as a larger business. So it's been tremendous for me especially being able to keep first services in-house without having to go through a third party that I'm unfamiliar with. It's good to actually know the people that you're partnering with. And if more businesses would do that I think that they would grow exponentially just from what we've seen. And even what's interesting is because of us joining together, I know, Theo, we've seen tremendously we've come up from all over the place just because of the network. You know even from our blogs and things like that since we've networked everything together especially from people who we went to college with. It's been a tremendous growth in just... we've been at this how long now, Theo, about a year a half now?

THEO: I think so, yeah.

MARTIN: A year and a half and I mean we've seen tremendous growth in our businesses from that collective economic perspective of working together and partnering and a lot of times you don't have to actually create a new company if you just work together and partner and build each business respectively, you'll get the same effect.

THEO: Yeah, I definitely agree cause I mean I know I've seen a lot of benefit in doing that. Now one thing I'm also big on if you've listened to the show before, one of the things I try to do even on my blog is I try to tell everyone to think global because you could have... you could have a business selling cookies in a community but now I can take my cookies, I can sell them in my community but I can also send them out to anywhere across the country and even the world and Benin, that's where I wanna kinda bring you in on the topic is -- you have a website called African path and I was really wanting to bring you on so you could explain what the African Path is because I really feel the importance in it because in our communities, our communities are also the people who are around, but they're also the people we work with and do business with in my opinion. So can you jump in and kinda tell us little more African path and the purpose that it has.

BENIN: Sure, sure. What we've decided to do with African path is provide an outlet for information about Africa, a place where you can go to find out so much different information, you know, from business to sports, to entertainment and take it and turn it into a continent based site that can attract a group of Africans that live in America or Africa or Europe or China or elsewhere in the world providing the daily breaking news

and through that traffic mix, what we wanted to do was fill a void, you know, that we feel is being left out of the mainstream media, the coverage of Africa. So, with that basically our goal is to connect marketeers and advertising to the homes of about of like four million up-scale consumers and businesses. You know so far we've been at it for a little bit less than a year. So far it's been a really fun ride seeing the traffic grow by leaps and bounds almost every month.

THEO: I feel that networking and it's really the most important part of owning a business because that's where a lot of your referrals are gonna come through and especially kind of like what me and Martin were working together, we knew each other so I felt comfortable with him. And people are gonna do business with people they feel comfortable with a lot of times in most cases, so I think that's really a great thing. I don't wanna leave Mugure out too long.

Mugure, you are located...your business is Precissdata. And you're located in Nairobi, Kenya and so I was really wanting to have you come on to explain kinda how, how that's working out you're in Kenya and you're trying to do business here in United States. How is that working?

MUGURE: We've been in business for about five years now. We market to our clients through the internet and also through one or two conferences that we've been able to attend not just in the US but also in the UK as well. It's been very exciting working with American companies so far.

THEO: Okay. Okay, so you're not just in the United States, you're saying you're in the UK also?

MUGURE: Correct. Our main clients come from the US, UK and also from Canada.

THEO: What situations have you been in where you're trying to do business here in the United States. If I own an American business and I wanna contact you, how does that work? Is it just a matter of calling you and we just work an agreement out or what's the best way to get in contact with you?

MUGURE: The most important way of communication is through the internet. We met Benin for instance through the internet. He was surfing the internet one day and I think he came across our website, and he got to contact us that way. We also spend a lot of time communicating by telephone and by email as well. When it comes to signing contracts, sometimes we use fax, sometimes we just use email, electronic signatures, that kind of thing. So, those are the main ways by which we communicate with our clients abroad.

THEO: Okay. I know we were talking before too about how, I think it was you and Benin are working together. Benin, you're handling the US and Mugure you're in Kenya. Now I guess the relationship that you all have. Benin, are you working to help Mugure find clients here in the US also?

BENIN: Well, sort of, the business relationship is sort of .. has sort of evolved. It's sort of had an evolution, so to speak. The way that I found out about Mugure is, I was writing a story about outsourcing in Africa and I kept coming across her website. I wrote a story about her without talking to her first, and then we actually spoke after the story was done.

MARTIN: You know I had a question for them. Me and Theo were talking about all of the innovations and technology that are coming out of Africa that a lot of people don't know about. You have operating systems and all these things that are really changing the face of technology. How do we utilize partnerships between the continents, like you're all doing with Africa Path and use those to take those technologies and bring them into the States and kind of bridge the two continents together through technology.

BENIN: Well, it's funny that you'd mention that at this time because about... maybe about three or four months ago I think, I think it was in the month of June there was a very large conference called TED Global. That sort of was the main theme of that particular conference. They did it in Arusha, Tanzania and really it was about putting the spot light on the new stories that are coming from the African continent whether they're in business or in arts or you know, politics. It's basically the new stories that are coming out of it and somehow they were each tying in into technology and really TED is very heavily involved in technological development. So that is one of the places that I go to when I want to find out new things that are coming out of the continent as they relate to technology but outside of TED there's a lot of individual blogs that are out there that also sort of do the same thing but on a more micro level.

THEO: Now, right now is there are like a one stop shop place that we could go to, because I know recently you all created the African Path directory and I don't know how many people signed up for the directory?

BENIN: Right now I think there are roughly... we're still in the beginning stages with it. But there's roughly seventy businesses that are in the directory right now.

THEO: Okay.

BENIN: Really, I guess that's sort of was our goal with African path to sort of take those different voices that were, you know smaller. You know like the smaller blogs and the smaller businesses and now basically bring them together in one place. And so that was really our vision for African Path. To sort of take the smaller voices and make them into like one large voice, so to speak.

THEO: Now, Mugure, I did have another question for you. When doing business here in the United States, are there any laws or any rules that we need to be aware of if we we're trying to... say for instance we're trying to take our products into Kenya. Is there anything that we need to be aware of?

MUGURE: Not specifically. If you wanted to invest, let's say in a sector in Kenya, for instance in our sector in outsourcing. There are some rules and regulations that you

would need to look into. For instance, you would need licensing from our communications regulator. Each of them kind of have their own, you know, kind of laws that you need to look into to. The sectors are varied, they're wide. I can't give you all of the explanations in this kind of forum, but you would be able to find them out when, you know, when you're interested in investing, so you take each case as it comes.

A lot of what's going on here economically in terms of positive growth and more companies that are growing and building the economy, a lot of that doesn't get into your media. So we really appreciate opportunities like these where the story can be told in a positive way. And you know technology has been so important for us here, connecting our developing economies with developed economies like yours, internet, voice over IP that is what is really enabling us to move forward. These are things I think that need to come out there.

THEO: Thank you for joining me, I wanna kinda end all of this really on a note that one of the things I really want to do is, I was really excited because we were bringing someone not only from different areas of the United States but just from another continent, in Africa. So, Mugure, thank you so much for taking the time out. I know there's a seven hour time difference, I guess, from us from the east coast and Africa. So I definitely wanna thank you for joining us, I really appreciate that. I wanna have some more discussions like these because I really don't wanna close the loop on the whole global economy and how, you know, we could all come together and allow each other, how we can work together as one community in different areas to grow our businesses and grow our names and market and advertise and all that. Definitely, Benin and Martin and Mugure, thank you so much for joining me. I really appreciate it.

MUGURE: Thank you for having me on the show.

MARTIN: Thanks for having us on. I think like you said, Theo, we need to have more dialogues about how we can use technology especially to engage in the principle of cooperative economics. It makes the world much smaller when we have that interface of technology.

THEO: It makes my business a whole lot easier. So thanks.

Once again that was Martin Hodges owner of L.E.A.D Business Network and Liberate Magazine. Benin Brown, fellow blogger of beninmwangi.com and africanpath.com and Mugure Mugo owner of PrecissData in Nairobi, Kenya. I know I did it after the show but I just wanna thank them so much for taking their time to get this done. It was a lot of fun and we're definitely gonna do this again. Business is something and entrepreneurship is something that's close to my heart and so I wanna thank J.W Richards of the Mandrake Radio Society for allowing me to be on his show again. I had a lot of fun putting it together.

In keeping with the principle of Ujamaa and cooperative economics there's a new segment that I wanted to have on the podcast and it's called the Minority business buzz.

And basically what it is, is if you have a business that you would like to highlight on this show, you could call in at my voicemail message hotline at 972-464-1899 and leave a voice message there.

You have about two minutes to leave a message or it'll cut you off but when you do just hang up the phone when you're done and I will play your advertisement on this show. Now it's definitely on a first come first served basis as I get them, I'll try to play them whenever I do a show. And this was something that I was really wanting to start in '08 but I always figured this was the best time to do it.

So our first caller in is the owner of Sportacular Players and I know this guy we used to work together and I can honestly say he does really good work. He's here in the Dallas area. And I called him and asked him at the very last minute if he could put together just a general advertisement for me and he was willing to do it. So I definitely appreciate him on that. So here is the commercial for Sportacular Players.

BLACK BIZ SHOWCASE: Sportacular Players equipment and apparels conveniently located at 3250 West Pleasant Run, Suite 260 in Lancaster, Texas is your one source for sporting goods. We provide sports equipment, same uniforms, screen printed t-shirts and custom embroidery. Sportacular Players can also satisfy your business needs. We provide store front lettering, magnetic signs and company apparel with your custom logo. Call us today at 972-230-8433. Better yet check us out on the web at www.sportacularplayers.com. Mention this ad and receive a 5% discount on your next purchase. Conditions do apply. Are you a sportacular player?

THEO: Well actually, I am. So if you're in the Dallas area, please go check out the store and if not, please check out it's website at sportacularplayers.com. Remember once again we're out to support our minority businesses, let's go show them some love and let them know that you heard about this advertisement on *Now that's what I'm talking about*, the podcast and go get your 5% discount. They will take care of you no matter where you are in the country so take advantage of that please. I know this brother, he don't give out too many discounts but he does really good work. So go check him out. And once again if you would like to have your business showcased on this podcast please send me a voicemail at 972-464-1899 or shoot me an email podcast@theojohnson.net and in the title put Minority Business Buzz.

It is now time for our black history hero. On every episode one thing that I try to do is have a black history fact or a black history hero. I just really feel that's important because what it allows us to do, it allows us to take a peek either in our history and look at people who have made significant contributions and look at those in the present. To showcase some of the people that are making big moves in today's society.

So the black history hero for this episode is Ephren Taylor. Now I heard about Ephren on a business radio interview and they were talking about his new book called *Creating Success from inside out, the focus and strategy to uncover the life you want*. And he just

had a really interesting story so I wanted to read off a little bit of information that I found on him on Wikipedia.

“Ephren W. Taylor II was born July 17, 1982 in Carlisle, Mississippi, a town with a population of around 200 people. His family lived in a house at the time with a tin roof and no hot water. After his father completed college, his job took the family to several other areas of the country, eventually settling on Overland Park Kansas, outside of Kansas City Missouri.

Learning computer programming at the local library after school, Taylor started his first business venture at age 12, when he began making 3D videogames and selling them to his friends in school for \$10 a copy. He sold over 100 copies of the game.

By age 17, he had built a website for teenagers valued at over \$3.4 million called GoFerretGo.com. The company was rated number four of Teen Companies Nationwide by YoungBiz magazine. Taylor began working with churches next, developing unique concepts for investing in their local community. These strategies earned him Kansas Young Entrepreneur of the Year in 2002.

Taylor developed several companies using these techniques for non-profits and for-profit. In 2006 he became CEO of City Capital Corporation making him the youngest African-American CEO of any public company in history. At City Capital Corporation, Taylor oversees \$150 million in assets, serving a diverse client list ranging from Wall Street investors, top executives, professional athletes and even entertainment icons.

His concepts on empowering local communities with both profitable and socially-conscious investing and development have made him a frequently requested speaker and panelist for events such as the Wall Street Economic Summit and the Congressional Black Caucus. Taylor is also a well-known guest expert broadcasting to millions of households on local and national television and radio shows including CNBC's Big Idea, FOX News' Your World with Neil Cavuto, Bulls & Bears and the Doug Bank's Morning Show. He currently hosts the *Soul of Success* radio show now airing on XM Satellite Radio Station on Family Talk 170XM. Taylor's appeal stretches beyond the United States borders, as he frequently receives interview and appearances requests from international entities, such as the London-based Wealth Monitor and BBC.

Recently, Taylor launched a 15-city “Urban Wealth Tour” promoting economic empowerment, affordable housing and entrepreneurship in urban communities. The tour brings together private investors, educators, non profit organizations, religious institutes, and government forces to create positive change in urban communities. Beyond his unprecedented accomplishments in the technology and financial industry, Taylor is an author, inspirational speaker and real estate mastermind. He has authored five e-books and was recently signed by a business publisher Wiley to release his first book in winter 2007.

Taylor has been asked to create a specialized curriculum for high school and college-aged aspiring entrepreneurs at America's oldest Historically Black College and University, Cheyney University, in celebration of their 170th anniversary. The Ephren Taylor Entrepreneurship Academy is scheduled to open in July 2007."

That is our black history hero Ephren Taylor. Now I have a link to his book and to some other shows that he's done. The show that he mentioned on *The big idea* there's a copy of it on Youtube and there's some other things that have links too on him where you can find out more information on what he's doing.

Yes, it is time for the music, it's time for the independent music artists showcase. And the artist that I have for you today is The Calibam project out of Central valley, California and I actually heard them on J.W's podcast. I heard he's doing mine yet so I figured why not? Right now is the best time to do so. So the song that I'll be playing for you is *Rain*. Hope you enjoy it.

That was The Calibam project with *Rain*. If you enjoyed the song you can find it in my show notes at thethoughts.net I will also have a link to their myspace page and a link to where you can download the song for your listening pleasure. And as always if you know of an artist that you would like to have showcased on this podacast, you can give me a call on the voicemail hotline at 972-464-1898 or shoot me an email podcast@theojohnson.net and we'll get them on.

Well, this is all that I have for you, I hope you enjoyed this show and once again, I thank you so much for listening to this podcast, I really enjoy putting this show on. Thank you so much to J.W Richards at the Mandrake Society Radio podcast for allowing me to be on your show, I appreciate it. And once again, let's not forget the principle of Ujamaa not just during this time but throughout all of 2008. Cooperative economics is so important to our businesses and I really feel that we can grow our businesses bigger and stronger if we work together and let's not forget the international aspect. With the technology that's coming out and the technology that is out. There's so much that we can do to take our business abroad and to make ourselves just known to more people. So let's always remember to think global, let's practice Ujamaa and let's make something happen.

Once again if you wanna get in contact with me, you can reach me on a number of different ways. You can check out the website at theotalks.net where I have my blog and my podcast, you can shoot me an email podcast@theojohnson.net. You can call the voicemail hotline at 972-464-1899. I'm on itunes where you can also hear my show and leave me a comment. I'm on createbuzz.com, myspace, skype, blackplanet and until next time, may God bless you and keep you. That's my show.

TAVIS SMILEY RECORDING: Every problem we face, every issue we have including an opportunity. So that's where we're gonna get the leader. Hold on to that, you're the leader-- And whatever your passion is, whatever your purpose is--I can say this now. --

Every one of us has a gift, every one of us has a gift. God did not bring, the creator did not bring any of us into the world without resident in our spirits a gift. The capacity to do something better than just about everybody else. Everybody has a gift, you have a gift, you have a talent, you have a skill, that's everybody. Now watch this...If you have a gift and your creator gave it to you, he prepared with that gift a corresponding need.

For every gift there is a need. If there's a gift there's a need. Whatever your gift, whatever your talent, whatever your skill is there is a need for it. Now get this, when your gift matches it's need, you are now walking in your vocation. When your gift matches it's need, you're walking in your purpose, you're walking in your calling. What is your gift, do you know there's a need for it. Are you prepared to walk in your calling? In your vocation?

That's what I mean when I say, you're the leader you're looking for. What's your gift? Match it up with the need. Whatever gift God gave you someone has need of it. We have need of your gift. And I want us to walk in our vocation. So whenever you hear raise to the right whatever your purpose is. When you need I want you to figure out how to match your gift with it's need. If everybody in America did that as individuals...

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