

Motivational Speakers Crystal Khalil & Dr. Nicole LaBeach are Inspiring Other Black Women to Achieve Greatness in Their Personal Life and Careers



Crystal Khalil



Dr. Nicole LaBeach

**Co-Founders
of
Sister Diamonds LLC**

<https://events.sisterdiamonds.com/womanunlimitedvip>

**Interview conducted by:
Bud Wayne, Editorial Executive
CEOCFO Magazine**

CEOCFO: *Would you tell us about your relationship and give us a little background on yourselves? Give us a personal look; why you are who you are?*

Crystal Khalil: Dr. Nicole and I were introduced by a mutual friend who happened to be a colleague of mine. At the time, I was the head of procurement at Porsche Cars, North America, and Dr. Nicole was the CEO of Volition Enterprises, Inc. It was her own firm that she had successfully led for about 16 years at the time. She was bidding on some business at Porsche, and he thought that we had similar spirits and that we would get along. After he introduced us, we hit it off at the first business meeting and decided to have lunch together at a later date. That lunch turned into about a five-hour conversation where we sat down in the restaurant and turned around and everyone was gone. We were the last ones seated, and they were cleaning up around us. We were laughing, crying, and instantly became friends on another level. It was a very different kind of conversation for both of us. I remember going back to work after that long lunch wondering what just happened. I recalled arriving very professionally. At some point, those masks fell off, and I met the real Nicole,

and I allowed Nicole to meet the real Crystal. We connected on a very personal level and knew instantly that we would be friends. Because she was bidding on some business at that time, we decided to keep some space and distance. We vowed to reconnect once that was all done. A couple of months later, we ran into each other at the Women's Business Conference in Washington D.C. I was the speaker, and she was an attendee. Since that connection was still strong, I took her around and introduced her to some of my network at the conference. We had dinner together and made a commitment to reconnect in a couple of months.

Crystal & Dr. Nicole social handles
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LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/sister-diamonds-llc/>
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In the meantime, I was going through a transition in life. I had achieved my dream job in procurement and supply chain for thirty years and had always been a hard worker, while striving. My parents taught me to work twice as hard to earn my seat at the table. I moved through the ranks from a first-generation college student to becoming an executive at Porsche. My dream position opened some doors, along with some glass ceilings, and was starting to show what was next. From all appearances, I had the dream job. I got a new Porsche every six months. I had all these connections and opportunities, but I was not fulfilled. I was meeting and exceeding everybody else's expectations, but I was not really walking in my purpose. I knew there had to be more for me. I wanted to explore but felt like I was in a golden cage. I had all the trappings, trimmings and things that spelled success. I did not feel like a personal success in a lot of ways because I did not feel like I was walking in my purpose, and I was not truly happy. I enjoyed serving other people, and I did that in a lot of ways in my community and with my family and friends. I was the one everybody came to when they needed solutions. I did not have anybody in my circle that supported me and my dreams and nobody that could see me for who I was, only what I could do for them. I was at a transition point where I wanted more, and I decided to retire from Porsche and pursue a lifelong passion for serving others through executive coaching and personal and professional development.

I made that leap in January 2020. My intention was to do that as a solopreneur, but God had other plans. Dr. Nicole found out that I left the organization and reached out. It was the most beautiful call because what she said basically said, "I see you, and I want to congratulate and celebrate you; I made the same decision in my life sixteen years ago, and I have been an entrepreneur and out here as a solopreneur for many years." She wanted to avail herself to help me in my goals and celebrate me. It was such an amazing and welcoming call. Then, she invited me to breakfast at her home. It was the most wonderful, homemade thoughtful breakfast. Eight hours later, we realized that we had a business. I joined forces with her in her business. Then, we co-created Sister Diamonds to serve women, like ourselves, that were making transitions in their lives and finding ways to walk in their purpose. These women had achieved a lot of great things but

were not fulfilled. With our Sister Diamonds brand, we help those women to unleash their own unlimited potential as we both did in our lives.

CEO CFO: *Where did the name Sister Diamonds come from? How did the idea for the company develop?*

Dr. Nicole LaBeach: When we got together for breakfast that day, it really was an extension of collaboration, not competition. It was us extending love and comradery from one entrepreneur to another. First of all, an eight-hour conversation is a full workday. Talking with someone and not being able to even tell you where the time went because there is so much synergy, laughter and connection is truly unique. That meeting was so special because it confirmed all of our previous meetings. We recognized that every time we came together, we were able to meet as our full, authentic selves. We did not feel like we were at risk of ever losing anything, but totally in a position to learn something. We did not feel like we couldn't be vulnerable; we were invited to be vulnerable with one another.

We started to recognize there was an opportunity for collaboration that can move us further into our purpose. After that eight hours, we decided to go into business. Our first venture was to create a conference for women our age, either moving up the corporate ladder seeking to move into entrepreneurship or seeking to scale their entrepreneurial adventure. When the pandemic hit, which was very close to that initial meeting, we decided to do something for our younger selves. The understanding was that diamonds go through a whole lot to become diamonds. There is heat, pressure, a purification process that is mistaken by none and it is not duplicated. Only diamond can cut another diamond. We were clear that when these women and entrepreneurs connect in community, they win. When women connect to build sponsors, how to build mentorship, how to build allies in the corporate arena, they win. When women collaborate in innovation, when they collaborate on how to do things bigger and better serve their communities and families, they win.

"Your light does not dim mine, my life does not dim yours, so turn it up, turn your light all the way up so that we can make a path for other women to see how to move into their greatest and highest selves." Dr. Nicole LaBeach

We were clearly aligned on championing the win of other people trying to move in purpose because we recognize there is power in being a diamond to cut another diamond so it shines most brilliantly. That initial thought was so metaphorically powerful for us. If we could show women how and what we are doing and the joy and success that comes out of it, we can give them the permission to allow themselves to move out of this detrimental competitive space and move into this space of vulnerability. This means being able to create trusting relationships and more success than ever. One of the things that Crystal and I talk about is that we did amazing things individually in our careers. When we got together, we were on Good Morning America in our pajamas. Everything moved into outer space, like a rocket that could not be captured when we joined our forces, let iron sharpen iron and was able to say "your light does not dim mine, my life does not dim yours, so turn it up, turn your light all the way up so that we can make a path for other women to see how to move into their greatest and highest selves."

CEO CFO: *Crystal, you were named as the first African American executive with Dr.-Ing. h.c. F. Porsche AG. In addition, you each have written books, Crystal would you first tell us about "Hard Workers Work Hard, And Networkers Move Up!" What made you write it and why is networking so important?*

Crystal Khalil: I was raised by two hardworking parents. My mother is from a little town called Rainsville, Alabama, and my dad is from a little town called Beaumont, Texas. My mom marched with Martin Luther King Jr., and she picked cotton. My dad was part of a family of farmers. They learned to work hard and taught me, as a black woman, that I had to work hard and exceed expectations. This required me to work twice as hard to get half potentially. You look at women in general, and where we are on the pay scale compared to men. We are out here working hard just to get a fraction. I was the first one in my family to go to college. When I started my career, I remember walking through my first job on the initial tour. I was looking around, and I was excited. I started to notice that I became lonely because I did not see anybody that looked like me in that office. There were very few women. Those that were there were in administrative positions, and there were no people of color. I was the first person of color in that office. All of my brilliance and genius kind of defaulted to what my parents taught me about how I had to work hard, keep my head down and my nose clean, stay to myself and keep people out of my personal business, exceed expectations. That is what I did.

I became the hardest worker. Year after year I would exceed expectations on my performance reviews, but I was not getting promoted. I was looking around at my colleagues who were being promoted. I started to question myself and thought that maybe I should get a Master's degree. I was working full-time, I am a wife, a mom, and going to school at night full-time. I still was not getting promoted. Now, I was at seven years at the corporation with my Master's. I had exceeded all expectations, and I still was not promoted. I decided to sit down with my director and have a conversation. I told him that I did not think this was the place for me anymore. I needed to leave because I was not being recognized for my hard work. He said he appreciated sitting down with me and what he said to me at that point changed my career. He said, "you are the hardest worker, but that is all you will ever be until you learn to network." People are hired, fired, promoted, and demoted, over watercooler conversations and lunch or golf and getting to know one another. You sit at that desk, and you network with your colleagues and you do not network up. He said, "that is how you move through an organization." I was so angry. You mean all that hard work and getting my degree does not matter? What matters most is getting to know people and getting people to know you. I started to look around and realized that the people moving up were not necessarily the hardest workers; they had mastered the art of exposure. I was not able to change it at that organization, and I ended up leaving. When I started at my new company, I had a different mindset of hard workers work hard and networkers move up.

From that point, that is how I navigated forward to open doors in my position as the first executive of color at Porsche, which inspired by book. My book was sharing the lessons I had learned from coming in as an entry-level, first-generation college student to navigating through different positions, to creating positions for myself and using the art of networking and building mentors and sponsors along the journey to help grow my career. Once I learned the art of networking, my career trajectory changed from applying and looking for positions to people coming to me for positions.

CEOCFO: *Dr. LaBeach, you have written two books, "A Woman's True Purpose: Live Like You Matter" and "Choose Yourself: A Journey Toward Personal Fulfillment For Women." What led you to writing those books and why is it import for you to help women be winners?*

Dr. Nicole LaBeach: I wrote my books out of my own feeling of how long are you going to hit your head up against this wall and expect not to have a headache? Recognizing that a lot of the things that were causing me pain, causing me to feel in spaces of chaos, causing me to feel in spaces where I was not clear or sure, were really based on some limiting beliefs, traumatic experiences, and dynamics that I was really trying to avoid because I did not know how to conquer them. I started to realize that a lot of women were in that same exact conversation. Unfortunately, many of us were somewhere in the conversation of creating freedom for myself. How do I understand my own story and how do I own my own narrative and not be driven by the narrative but drive the narrative?

I wanted to help women understand that all of the things that have happened work together for your good and part of that working together for your good is that you were created good at the start. No matter what has happened, you are still good. Your scenarios, traumas and incidences. Where you grew up and what you had or did not have are not DNA contributors. The DNA that you have helps create your story. Once created good, you are good. I really wanted to unpack that so that women could get the freedom that they needed to really bloom into where they were being called to do and manage their fear, themselves, their self-perception, and really have a sense of self-awareness.

In my book, I talk about the inside. A lot of Crystal's book works from the outside. Together, it is a wonderful package. That inside work informs your ability to walk into any room and understand you have changed the dynamic by showing up. It allows you to recognize, why someone can see me as a sponsor when I am not in the room. Why can't I have a viable conversation that gives me the opportunity to show my genius? It was my acceptance that I was tired of taking Tylenol to figure out how to be at peace and starting to say "I do not want to be in pieces, I just want to be at peace, so let me do my self-work and hopefully be able to help other women do the same for themselves so that they can move into what they believe is purpose for them."

CEOCFO: *We are in Black History Month? Why is celebrating Black History important?*

Dr. Nicole LaBeach: That is the prayer from the most humble space because everything we do is based on the pillars of service, humility and excellence. That spells SHE. That is the acronym for She. We committed ourselves to be in Service, Humility and Excellence with other women who have Service, Humility and Excellence to offer in their gifts, their purpose, their talents in the most meaningful space of who they are and beyond what they do. The prayer and intention are goodness multiplies. It picks up traction. Legacy is made of being able to impact your community, be a community and

move in purpose. Exponentially, that intention grows through the women that we are able to serve and take this journey with.

Crystal Khalil: We made great strides and achievements as individuals. As far as black history, we are very excited that we are co-founders of the world's largest international slumber party for young women of color all over the world. We founded the International Slumber Party in 2020 just after the pandemic. Earlier that year, we were going to do a conference for women our age, and the pandemic happened along with George Floyd. There was political, civil and mental unrest. We started to notice it, and some students sat with teachers at Spellman. After that we had to pivot like everybody else because nobody was doing in-person events. We had to find a way to do virtual events. We decided to take the opportunity to pivot to do something to support these young women whose lives have been disrupted so severely. We brought together a focus group of fifty young women from Spellman and asked them what we could do to inspire them. As leaders, we said, "take off the breaks, so dream outside the box, and we will support you in building something magnificent." The outcome of that was the International Slumber Party. We quickly learned that their ideas were so amazing. We decided we wanted to host the event virtually in a 2D mansion that looks like the Princess Diaries. We started making phone calls and we brought together our network of friends and colleagues from amazing organizations like Porsche, Mercedes, and Chick-Fil-A. We said we got these young women that are dreaming big and need mentoring. Everybody we called said yes because they understand the power of networking.

We built these relationships, and they call came in and helped us. In less than 45 days, we created the world's largest international slumber party of 10,000 young women of color in 32 countries in the first year. We had several viral videos on social media. We were on Good Morning America in our pink pajamas, and it got picked up all over the world. We were able to solicit the experience of 82 speakers including Lisa Nichols, and former mayor Shirley Franklin of Atlanta and Nicki Taylor from Essence Magazine. They all volunteered to come and speak to these young women about business, relationships, self-care, and finance, and it was amazing. It was a 24-hour event around the world. We repeated that in 2021 with 10,000 young women of color from over 100 countries We are doing it again this November 4th, and we are supremely happy to announce that we will be doing it this year in the Metaverse. We will be introducing new technology to these young women, providing mentorship and allowing them the opportunity to network with other young women around the world.

In the first year, we learned if you can see it, you can be it. We had young women that joined us from countries that we had never heard of. In their physical location, they may not have been able to vote or they were limited in their jobs. To see Tina Perry of the Oprah Winfrey Network speak to and tell them they could be whoever they want and run a network on television, and hearing firsthand from these businesswomen left them in awe and tears. Now they could see this in action with the an opportunity to interact with them. They could now believe they could achieve so much.

Dr. Nicole LaBeach: The power of Black History Month and the power of black history is if you do not know your history, you are doomed to repeat it. If you do know your history, you are elevated by it. Many of these young women connected to the International Slumber Party are expanding the possibilities for themselves by seeing the possibilities in others. This allows them to be more inquisitive, apt to seek access, apt to leverage their brilliance and understand that they have their own genius to offer. Then, it goes into the communities and is extended to potentially the college experience and potentially a corporate experience. It gives them the opportunity to create a legacy.

CEOFCO: *We are in Black History Month? Why is celebrating Black History important? One hundred years from now, will people be talking about Sister Diamonds contribution to Black History?*

Dr. Nicole LaBeach: We hope that if we are remembered for anything a hundred years from now, that it will be the seeds that we were able to plant, the watering that we were able to give, and the people that we were able to bring along in that journey in conversation to help women and young women around the world create a harvest.

CEOFCO: *Let's talk about your next event scheduled for February 18, 2023, "Women Unlimited." How has the response been and would you tell us about it? Then what should attendees look for? How will you help women achieve their career dreams and relationship goals?*

Crystal Khalil: Our upcoming Women Unlimited is being hosted on Saturday, February 18th from 9:00 am to 1:00 p.m. eastern standard time. Women can register at womenunlimitedlive.com. It is open to the general public and free for general admission. There is a small charge for VIP entry, which includes a one-on-one with us to help women and coach

them toward their purpose. That experience is available to any woman who is ready to unbind and unleash her unlimited potential. In those four hours, we share the three secrets that we learned in our personal journeys of unbinding and unleashing. These pillars are liberation, activation and acceleration. We share how you use these traits along with the secrets that we have learned and watched others use to achieve success. We share those secrets with the women, and it is a huge aha moment. When we talk business and relationships, one of the things that we have learned is the same tools you need in a romantic relationship. These include: vulnerability, boundaries, and connection, which are the same tools you need in a business relationship. We teach those tools and host an environment that is maskless. As women, we do not often get in environments where we can show up as we are and be seen and heard. It is a very interactive, engaging on-camera virtual experience where you actually engage with us. We are not talking at you; we are engaging with one another, and you connect with other brilliant women from around the world. We are learning the secrets to unbind, unleash and create the Y.U.M.M.Y. life that we deserve. We define yummy as Your Ultimate Most Meaningful Yet.

Crystal  Dr. Nicole