

PROFESSIONAL TROUBLEMAKER



with LUVVIE AJAYI JONES

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Discover Your Purpose (with Elizabeth Gilbert) - Episode 21

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Welcome to the Professional Troublemaker Podcast! This is the place where we help you cultivate the courage, authenticity and audacity you need to use your voice, take up space and live a life that is so bold, even your wildest dreams say #goals. I'm your host, Luvvie Ajayi Jones, New York Times bestselling author, sought after speaker and side-eye sorceress bringing you thought-provoking conversations with amazing people taken action, done scary things and rocked the boat to an audacious life. Like the late, great John Lewis said, these are the kind of people who are "Never, ever afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble."

Before we jump into today's interview, know that this podcast is named after my second New York Times bestselling book, Professional Troublemaker: The Fear-Fighter Manual, which is available now wherever you get your books!

With this book and with everything I do, and I'm on a mission to help a million people live audaciously. To do that, they must fight their fear.

Think of it! A million people who are out there, standing on the edge of something great and need that little push of encouragement. That push to be the domino. To say the hard thing. To have the hard conversation. A million people kicking their fear to the curb and step into the life they've been dreaming of. A million people asking for a raise. A million people starting a fierce job they're not sure they're ready for. A million people doing something so big that their wildest dreams say goals. My goodness.

And that is what writing this book has done for me, what it's already done for those who are reading it and gifting it to others. This book has empowered people to say yes to things they were previously saying no to. It's empowered people to have tough conversations they weren't going to have before. People have asked for raises and promotions and gotten them after reading this book and finding the courage to speak up. The domino effect of what has been happening when a few people have decided not to live in the realm of fear has been amazing - think of what could happen if a million people stopped letting fear be the first factor in their decision making?

An audacious mission like that can't happen without you, so let's get this book in the hands of people who need it. Buy a copy of Professional Troublemaker for yourself, or as a gift for your friend who needs a push. I know it will change your life like it's changed mine and I know it will change the lives of all these people who touch it, because domino effects are real. Order Professional Troublemaker

(hardcover or audiobook) now at PROFESSIONALTROUBLEMAKERBOOK.com or wherever you buy books.

I'm excited to share this episode with you. A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to be a guest on Elizabeth Gilbert's Onward Book Club that she holds each month on her Instagram Live. Elizabeth created the Onward Book Club as a way of spotlighting, studying, and celebrating the work of Black female authors, and I was honored to be her guest in April because she wanted to feature [Professional Troublemaker: The Fear-Fighter Manual](#).

During our conversation, we talk about my grandmother and why her story and spirit are so integral to the book, drawing boundaries around what is sacred, why Liz and I mutually don't believe in the concept of fearlessness. Also, we have a really good piece where we talk about why we have to dream audaciously, like these mountain-sized dreams, not mattresses. So let's jump in.

Conversation with Elizabeth Gilbert

LUVVIE Hi.

ELIZABETH Hi, beautiful. All right. I'm turning off the comments so we can see your gorgeous face. Oh my God. So you're just going to look like this? This is what it is? And the rest of us have to just look like this?

LUVVIE Listen, I just put on lipstick. You know what? I feel like I'm going to put on my really good lipstick for you.

ELIZABETH Thanks. I'm deeply moved. I've seen your video of how fast you can get ready for an Instagram interview with your blazer on the back of the chair and your lipstick at the pocket and the hat.

LUVVIE That's what I just did.

ELIZABETH All right. Hang on a second because I have a costume change.

LUVVIE Ooh.

ELIZABETH I have an honorary I'm interviewing Luvvie today costume change. I got my Luvvie sunglasses.

LUVVIE Yes.

ELIZABETH I got my Luvvie hat.

LUVVIE Yes.

ELIZABETH I got to wear it a little farther back in my head though, so that it looks like the way you wear it. All right. Yeah. And I have my Luvvie intro. Are you ready? Here we go. I'm so happy to see you.

LUVVIE [crosstalk 00:05:46] So good to be her with you.

ELIZABETH I'll take this nonsense off in a minute, but this is my way of telling you how much I love you. Here we go. Luvvie Ajayi Jones is a star. She is the New York Times Bestselling author of two wildfire memoirs and life guides. I'm Judging You: The Do-Better Manual, and Professional Troublemaker: The Fear-Fighter Manual, both New York Times Bestseller, number one Amazon bestseller, Washington Post bestseller.

ELIZABETH She's a superstar blogger and activist, a marketing wizard, an internationally respected expert on the very serious subject of shoes. She is a voice of truth who is not afraid to speak publicly about the life-changing power of Shea butter, which I also have with me as my prop. She is the owner of, perhaps, the most enviable pair of cheekbones the world has ever seen. She's a compelling and hilarious podcaster, an Oprah Winfrey SuperSoul 100 all-star, unchallenged heavyweight multi-time world champion of the side eye, a TED speaker whose talk has inspired millions of social media presidents beloved by her army of LuvvNation, and a critic of the status quo whose very existence strikes terror in the collective guts of the mediocre. Born in Nigeria, forged in Chicago, a true global citizen, the leader for our times, Luvvie.

LUVVIE I might have to change my actual official bio to that. I might get that to and be like, "This is my new bio" because that is Epic.

ELIZABETH I'll send it to you. I'll send it to you.

LUVVIE Please do.

ELIZABETH First of all, welcome, and how are you, and where are you?

LUVVIE Thank you for having me. I am in Chicago at home, in my home office. And listen, you are the last person I am talking to before I go on break.

ELIZABETH Good.

LUVVIE I'm taking a two week break at the end of April because you already know book launches suck the soul out of you because you have to put so much out there, you have to be in the midst of peopling, you have to talk to 1000 people. So yeah, no, I'm looking forward to the break, but I was like, "Yes, please." What a great way to basically wrap up my launch is with you.

ELIZABETH I'm so happy That you did it, but I'm even happier that you're stopping. I'm a very big fan of women who do too much stopping. So that makes me delighted. I think that's probably the best role model that you can be right now, except for those of you who aren't doing anything and we need you to actually do it.

LUVVIE We need you to do stuff. Right. We need those who are not doing nothing to do something, and we need those of us who do too much to rest.

ELIZABETH I'm putting shea butter on my hands right now just to get warmed up for this. Okay. I have a question I want to launch with, but you talking about how exhausting book tour is, and I know,

and I know how you can kind of hate your book by the end of it because you're so sick of it and you're sick of telling your own story. And I wanted to ask you, what is the question that people ask you the most that I will know not to ask you that so that you don't have to answer it for the millionth time?

LUVVIE Ooh, what is a professional troublemaker? But you know what's funny? Is even though everybody asks me that I still always think it's necessary to talk about it. So I was like, it's the question I get the most, but I'm like, it's necessary.

ELIZABETH So should we do it? Should we-

LUVVIE So let's do it.

ELIZABETH Okay. Go. Luvvie, what is a professional troublemaker? I've always wanted to ask you this. This is my burning question. What is a professional troublemaker and what isn't? Because you also write in your book what a professional troublemaker isn't, which I think is really important as well.

LUVVIE Yeah. I think a professional troublemaker is somebody who is committed to disrupting for the greater good. They're the people who will say and do the hard things, not because they're not afraid, but because they realize it is necessary. They're not just like contrarians, they're not the trolls who put random comments on your captions, or they're not the person in the room who's just making everybody uncomfortable for the sake of it. They are people who are like, "I need to do something here. And even though it might rock the boat, it's still important enough for me to do." We all need professional troublemakers in our lives and I think we all need to be professional troublemakers.

ELIZABETH Wow. It sounds like you've never even answered that question before, it just came out so fresh. But if there is one thing that you're going to be talking about again and again let it be that, because you're right, it's incredibly important. And with that said, I want to start by talking about the Oriki.

LUVVIE Yes.

ELIZABETH And essentially, what I was doing at the beginning of this was my version of an Oriki for you. You've written your own, but would you take a moment and explain to everybody what that word means and what that concept is and why you started your book with it?

LUVVIE Yeah. So the Oriki is from Yoruba land. I am a Yoruba girl from Nigeria, and it is a tradition that exists to affirm who you are. It ties you to your lineage, it reminds you why you're amazing. And I call it a standing ovation for your spirit. And when you hear an Oriki, you instantly feel this person's power. You're like, "Oh my God, you sound amazing." Right? So when you were reading my bio to me, I was like, "Yes."

And I think it's important for Orikis to exist because we spend a lot of time in a world being told why we're not good enough, why we're too much. We get a lot of messages that tell us that we

suck or that we don't deserve love and care. So the Oriki is the exact opposite of that. I think it's the anecdote.

ELIZABETH And you grew up with an incredible champion of a human being, who I think all of us who have read your work, we love her, we long for her, we envy you that she was your grandmother, and her presence and her spirit permeates not only everything that you write, I think, but everything that you are and everything that you do in the world, and I don't feel like we can really begin this conversation until you've introduced us to your grandmother. And give us basically your version of the Oriki of her.

LUVVIE Oh my God. My grandmother, Funmilayo Faloyin, was just such a bright spirit. She was this woman who took up space without apology. She allowed herself to be celebrated. And she was so kind, but she took no shit. And she was so loved. My grandmother would take the shirt off her back if you said you wanted it. In fact, the ring that I wear is hers. One day she was wearing it and I was like, "Oh my God, grandma I like it," and she took it off her finger and gave it to me and I've been wearing it since. It's probably been about 15 years. I don't really take this off. And she was that type of a person who knew that she deserved to exist in the world, did not apologize for herself, cared deeply about everybody else but also did not allow herself to be subject to disrespect. She was a woman who gave me permission to be who I am today.

ELIZABETH There's an astonishing story that you tell in this book about her young life. And if you don't mind retelling it... First of all, I want to hear it again because I want to see that movie. I mean, what she went through, what she became, I want you to tell it because I feel it's really important, which sometimes when you meet somebody who has that much stature and that much grand jury and not much charisma, I mean her charisma just long after her death it radiates off the page. It's palpable.

LUVVIE Yeah.

ELIZABETH But people are born that way. Life forges them and they forge themselves. Can you just explain a little bit about like her very young life and what she went through in order to become that?

LUVVIE Yeah, she was the ultimate troublemaker and life turned her into that. And because it did, she was actually able to survive. So when my grandmother was about 16, her father was next in line to be King in the village that he was from. He was a teacher. He was an educated man. He was a teacher that lived in Lagos, her mom was a homemaker. And actually her grandmother, his mother, was next in line, but because she was a woman, she couldn't take the crown. So she was like, "Well, next in line to me is my son David." So she gives David the crown. So he has to move his family from this bustling city where he's a teacher to this rural area where he now has to assume the duties of being a King, which comes with a lot of things. Right? Tradition asks for you to change different things about you. You are basically sent to the throne with all of these rituals.

So he makes it to the throne. My grandmother is a city girl. I mean, the city girl is now a village girl. And within a year he dies. Not sure how. Within few months of him dying, his wife dies, my grandmother's mother. So now at 17, she went from the city to the village. She went from a family in a bustling city to now being an orphan and having to take care of her younger sister.

So, because she's a woman, they just made her a regent. So while they looked for replacement because now the line is broken, that's a fine and new replacement, she had to be the regent, which means she was basically King for a few months.

ELIZABETH As a 16 year old orphan.

LUVVIE Yes. Yes.

ELIZABETH Take that in everybody. It's such an astonishing story. Sorry, go ahead. But...

LUVVIE When I was told I was like, "Oh my God." So then she ends up having to move... I think her little sister was 13 at that point. So now that a new replacement came and that person is now on the throne, her uncle happens to be a villain. He was just not a good person. So he actually took all her inheritance. Everything that was supposed to come to her because her father, the King, died, he takes it and burns their house. So all her memories also gone with her parents. And then he tries to attach her to an older man and give her hand in marriage. This all happened in a two year span. And my grandmother, instead of saying yes to that, takes her younger sister and runs away in the middle of the night to a city two hours away and starts a new life at at 20. And that's where she met my grandfather a year later. That's when she had my mom, I think 10 years after that. And then, yeah.

ELIZABETH Yeah. That's who you come from.

LUVVIE That's the stock I come from, yeah.

ELIZABETH It explains a lot, Luvvie. I just want to say it makes sense of a lot of things. When I read that I'm like, "Yeah, that tracks, that was be,

You had a massive shift in your young life as well, when your family migrated from Nigeria to Chicago. And you were a very young girl and they didn't tell you that you were now living in Chicago. I mean, this is a really traumatic break of existence for a child. And I want to know if you can talk a little bit about how that transformed you and what that did for you, that realization that you'd gone from your own paradise to a place where it's winter 11 months out of the year.

LUVVIE Right. And you know what's interesting is I didn't realize it was trauma until I started therapy four years ago. I would have never called it trauma. And I was like, "Oh, that's what that was. Oh, I just thought it was a thing. Okay?" I just thought it was a thing, I didn't even have the language. Yeah. Moving to the US when I was nine was something I didn't know we were doing because we visited the US before, we'd come on vacation, we would come for two weeks, head back home. So when we were coming, I just thought it was another two week vacation. And I got enrolled in school and I was like, "Hold up, wait a minute. School? That means we're staying." "Yeah, we're staying." And I'm like, "Oh mom, how come nobody tells the baby?" Because I'm the baby of the family.

ELIZABETH Nobody ever tells the baby anything.

LUVVIE

Nobody ever tells the baby. And I was like, "Yo guys, come on." So the first thing I thought about when I was like, "Oh my God, we're staying," is that I didn't get a chance to say bye to my best friend who I had been best friends with since I was one, because I started school at one, I started reading at three. And we were inseparable. And I was like, "Oh my God, I didn't get a chance to say bye to her." And I remember somebody was going back to Nigeria and I gave them an envelope with a dollar bill in it and a note for her. And I said, "Give this to her when you see her." Because I was nine. I couldn't call her, I didn't know her number. In Nigeria we didn't even have each other numbers. I just saw her in school every day. So I literally sent a package with somebody. I was like, "Give this to Tomy, make sure she gets this." And I wrote a note in there.

So being the new girl in this place where most people didn't look like me, my name was different, the way I spoke was different for the first time ever, I'd never experienced feeling different until I was nine, until I walked into that classroom and the teacher goes, "Introduce yourself." And I was like... And me, I instantly knew that who I was was not going to be welcome in that room in terms of being this full Nigerian girl whose name was, Ifeoluwa, which means God's love. I was like, "Oh no, I can't use that name here. They're not going to be able to pronounce it." So I was like, "My name is Luvette," which is something that my aunt called me sometimes as a nickname when she wants to joke with me, and I was like, "My name is Luvette." Well, of course I said it with full Nigerian accent.

And yeah, I sat down and I was like, "Okay, I got to figure this out." And I sat there and I listened to how my classmates spoke and I was like, "I can speak like that. I can do that." And at lunchtime, when I brought my jollof rice, they were like, "What is that?" I was like, "Jollof, rice." And they were like, "What is that?" And I was like, "My food." So everything I did was different. When I went to ask for a pen, I asked for a biro. In Nigeria we call pens biro. So they were like, "Biro?" And I was like, "Ah, okay, that's not the word that you use for that."

So then I stopped talking for a bit and I just listened in class. I'll just be like, "Okay, let me just watch what they're saying and see how it's different from what I'm saying and just what I'm saying." And kids adapt. So I made friends, I would get teased for my Africanness, which is funny because the kids... And me, I'm so funny because I'm like, "If you're going to make a joke, make it make sense." So they would make jokes that's like Jamaican jokes and I'm like, "I'm not even Jamaican. I'm African. So at least make the joke make sense." So here I am being like, "That doesn't make any sense. I don't understand why you're using that."

ELIZABETH

I love that you're correcting people's bullying.

LUVVIE

I am. I was. I totally was like, "That makes no sense. I'm not even Jamaican." I couldn't help myself. I was like, "If you're going to do it, do it right. Come on."

ELIZABETH

Oh man. You know what I think it's so amazing about that? My partner, Raya, was Syrian and she came to Detroit when she was eight years old. And she has exactly the same story of just the elasticity of a kid's brain to be like, "Okay, this is no longer correct." The same thing. "This is no longer my name. This is my name now." And she didn't speak English so she had to catch up really fast.

LUVVIE

Wow.

ELIZABETH And she's like, "I will not have an accent." And she said she used to sit in front of the mirror and just practice formulating words with an American accent so that within six months she, having dropped down in this country could speak like an American kid. And there's something that's so astonishing about that ability but at the same time it came for her with a really traumatic split, where in her sense, part of the split was she was never quite fit in anywhere again, because she was too American to be Syrian, but she was too Syrian to be American. She was the youngest in the family so she was the most American. So she kind of didn't fit in with the family. And I wondered if you had that experience in your life to have this division of too Nigerian to be from Chicago, too Chicago to be Nigerian. How does your family see you? It can create a sense of a person being a little bit displaced and...

LUVVIE Yeah. Well, what's interesting is I did live two lives, in that, okay, I got back home, I went by my Yoruba name, was eating my pounded yam and Egusi, I was going to a Nigerian church, so every Sunday I was in Nigerian culture for four to five hours, because Nigerians be in church all day long, it's a full day affair. So it's interesting. I would go to school and be this one person and come home and be right back to where I come from. My mom speaks Yoruba to us. I was speaking Yoruba to my siblings and then it switched to us speaking mostly English to each other.

But yeah, so that actually allowed me to maintain my feet because I wasn't going home all of a sudden I'm now this American girl, no, I was right back to Nigeria, but it was different because of the fact that you went from living in the house in Nigeria that had multiple bedrooms to live in a one bedroom apartment four of us. So that was a shift. But it's again, to the point of not realizing it's trauma until after the fact.

ELIZABETH Yeah.

LUVVIE When your life has a-

LUVVIE Not realizing this trauma until after the fact.

ELIZABETH Yeah.

LUVVIE When your life has a peak, one period is before immigration, after immigration, like BI-AI, like where you can see the exact split in when you stopped being one person and started taking on another persona, it does absolutely shift something in you. But to your point, the elasticity of kids, it's mind boggling. I lost my accent. For sure I didn't have it by before I started high school. I fit in in every way, but every first day of school I would go early and go to every class and tell my teachers not to use my first name.

ELIZABETH Wow.

LUVVIE And I'd say, "Hey, mark that off on your list. Here's my actual name that I go by," because I never wanted them to introduce my Yoruba name to the class because people would be like, "Ooh, say that again." I'd be like, "Nope. Not interested in teaching you." Like, "Nope. That is something that you don't have access to." It was a protective measure that I took for myself to be like, "Mm." Now I have a sacred space that I was not allowing them to touch.

ELIZABETH That's what I wanted to talk about with that, is you have a whole section in the book about boundaries and I wanted to get in it because it's so important. It's so important for women and you speak about it so well, and it seems like you've had pretty airtight boundaries your entire life, but I'm sure that you've also learned how to have them, how to create them, how to maintain them, how to sustain them. But the way that you talk about the fact, you write your given name in the book at one point, and then in a footnote, you say, "This is not for you to pronounce," to the reader. It's like a boundary. I've never seen anybody set a boundary on the fucking page with a reader and said, "I'm going to show you what my name is, but this is not for you to sound out, this is not for you to pronounce. This is only for the people who love me nearly and dearly. You don't get to have this." I thought, "She knows exactly what is sacred."

One of the things that I always want to convey to women is that we think of boundaries, and I think part of the reason it can scare us is that we think of them as these very hard, fierce, like seawalls, you know? But I think that there's, what it is it's a circle that you draw around what is sacred and you stand in the middle. You better be standing in the middle of that circle. The center of that sacred circle had best be you. If you're not in the center of a circle of what is sacred, you would have very [inaudible 00:26:35] time in life. And then you stand in the middle of that circle and then you choose who gets to come how close, you know?

You putting your name and saying, "My name is..." Your name is about being a gift from God. It's like, your name is sacred. You get to choose who even gets to have it in their mouth or on the page. I was like, "God, I love that you model that." You know? I love that see it as it's holy.

LUVVIE Yeah. It's interesting. I had forgotten I even put that footnote in there. That's hilarious. But you know why I did it? In my first book is when I first introduced my first name to people, and my editor, my first draft of my first book I actually didn't put it in there. That's how protective I was, because I was like, "If I'm even telling people what it is, they're going to want to use it." So in doing it, I found that after my first book, some people who read the book would hit me up on social with my given name.

ELIZABETH Oh.

LUVVIE And I was like, "Yikes, don't do that ever. God." Even a couple of months ago, somebody was still doing it who would like message me and be like, and use my given name and it felt like such an intrusion.

So it's hilarious which I put in this footnote, because I think I first saw the fact that when people would know the first name, they'll think they have access to it. I was like, "Let me just make it clear: no you don't."

I know how somebody met me or what stage of my life that they met me in based on the name they called me.

ELIZABETH Right.

LUVVIE My name is a timeline. It's actually the essay that I wrote in the Brené Brown and Tarana Burke anthology. It's all about how my names have shifted based on my life. And yeah, the boundaries that we draw about ourselves, our names are absolutely that.

LUVVIE There are a lot of us who have nicknames and only family will call us.

ELIZABETH Yeah.

LUVVIE Right? And just because somebody might know, "Oh, that's your nickname?" does not mean you have access to it.

That's why you have to honor it and I think names are such a big piece because our names, they are the things that are, which is why we have to respect when people say, "I want to be called this." Whether it's giving name, whether it's nickname, whether it is a new name that came up with, honoring somebody's name choice is a big piece of respect that people have to be able to double down on. But a lot of us who grew up with harder names to pronounce, even though no one had access to my first name, there's Ajayi- Well, I just added Jones, but there's a Ajayi, which I spent my whole life correcting people on, like whole life, and it's something that I'm so sensitive about because I'm like, "My name is actually not hard." It's not-

ELIZABETH It's not Schwarzenegger, which no one has problems with.

LUVVIE That's what I'm saying. How do you all say Schwarzenegger, but you can't say Ajayi? They see Ajayi and instantly go, "Oh no, that's hard. I'm not going to be able to pronounce it." So then it becomes-

ELIZABETH You guys are all walking around very happily saying Daenerys Targaryen about your favorite show. You can't say...

LUVVIE You say it about all- Tchaikovsky? Okay. Tchaikovsky has all types of consonants. They see Ajayi, five letters, and they freak out. They'd be like, "[inaudible 00:05:43]? Ajay? Ayaji? Ajaya?" I'm just like, "Listen, take the burden off my name. Take the difficulty that you have ascribed to it off it. It literally is as it is spelled: Ajayi." And I still get people being like, "Oh man."

When I got married, I knew that I was going to keep Ajayi even if I took Jones because I had spent all this time teaching people how to say it. You're not going to stop having to say it now.

ELIZABETH You earned it.

LUVVIE And I really wanted it to represent for those of us who have spent our lives, who don't see our names on the cups, who don't see our names on the key chains, those of us who spent all our lives trying to shape-shift based on making other people comfortable to see our fullness and be able to show up in it, those of us who have been told, "Do you have a nickname that you want to go by?" Or, "I don't know. This is hard." I wanted that name to stay and be on a New York Times bestselling book, now it's on two, so a girl somewhere whose name is also tough to pronounce says, "No, they owe me the correct pronunciation for this and they must do the labor to get it right."

ELIZABETH Luvvie, you and I share a philosophy that I don't often hear people say in the world of inspiration or motivation. We mutually do not believe in the concept of fearlessness. In fact, I spend a lot of time trying to undo what I think is the damage that's been caused to people by that word and by the assumption that you're supposed to be fearless.

LUVVIE Yes.

ELIZABETH I was wondering if you could just pick up on that idea because you speak about it so brilliantly. I was sort of air pumping in the book as I was reading you talk about that because I know we're on the same page there.

LUVVIE Yes. I think fearlessness has been weaponized because we've heard it so much. People now feel shame for being afraid. People feel like they're somehow wrong for being like, "Yikes," for feeling those moments where your blood might pump fast or when your heart might be going pitter-patter, when you're just like, "I don't know if I want to do this."

That word fearless has attached so much guilt to what is a natural human emotion. Fear. Fear exists. It is the most visceral thing next to love and joy. Fear exists biologically. We keep it safe, right? It is therefore purpose. Nobody's fearless, and if you are fearless when you are afraid of nothing, it's actually considered a psychological disorder. That actually means something is wrong in your brain. If you are like, "I fear nothing. I walk without any doubts, any anxiety," that's not real.

That's why I call this a fear fighter manual, not the fearless manual, because fear exists for us to fight it, right? First to know the moments when it is keeping us safe and the moments when it is actually holding us down. Most of the time it's actually holding us down.

ELIZABETH Speak about the TED Talk. First of all, everybody, if you haven't, if you're not among the millions of people who have watched [Luvvie's TED Talk](#), please remedy that after you've watched this. But the next thing that you're going to do after you watch this interview is you're going to go watch her TED Talk.

I saw that before I knew you and before I knew who you were. First of all, it's hard for me to imagine anybody's ever looked better giving a TED Talk. What can we just talk about the yellow blazer and the wing tips? Oh my God. Secondly, setting that aside, and I hate to because it's important-

LUVVIE I'll tell you about the yellow blazer, mm-hmm (affirmative).

ELIZABETH We have to get back to the yellow blazer. But setting that aside, it genuinely surprised me and I don't know why because I shouldn't be surprised at people's humanity, but it genuinely surprised me to learn of the fact that you almost turned that down because of a fear and a sense of maybe not belonging there. I wonder if you could speak about that because I want that to dovetail into a conversation about belonging and about who belongs where and about claiming your stage and claiming your voice.

It's so easy to look at you because you move through the world with such incredible self-confidence and what looks like an endless reservoir of comfort in yourself and who you are that I think it's helpful for people to see, no, you were really traumatized by the idea of giving a TED Talk, as was I. It's not an easy thing to do. It's a really scary thing to do. If you could just tell that story, I think it would be great for everybody. And she tells it in the book too, but tell it in your own words.

LUVVIE

I had done two TEDx talks before the talk, but what's funny, I don't even think TED saw my TEDx talks. It was a year after, actually, it was six months after my first book came out, I'm Judging You came out, Pat Mitchell reached out to me. I think I was even one of the first people they reached out to for TED women to speak. It was about May 2017. I instantly was like, "I can't do that." The excuse I had in my head was I was on a 10-city speaking tour that year with Glennon and Abby in that fall. I had a total of 50 speaking engagements that year. Fifty. Love me Chicago, keep in mind. None Of them in Chicago. So I was like, "Oh no, no, that can't happen. A TED Talk the year that I have 50 talks?"

Knowing that TED insists that you give energy to them, like they get you a coach, they get you all types of rehearsals and they read your script, they change it, they make you edit it four times if they need to. So I instantly was like, "Yikes, I don't even have the capacity to handle that."

Then they came back again a few months later and was like, "Hey, come do a panel at TED because we're going to do a together panel," and I was like, "Oh, I can't." Now I'm getting booked for the day of TED so I can't even come.

Three weeks before TED, I realized that the conference that I was emceeing and keynoting, I actually didn't have to be there until November 2nd, and TED was November 1st, so I was like, "Ooh. You know what? Maybe I can come for a day and cheer on my friends who are speaking and just be another friendly face in the audience that's clapping hard for everybody." Pat Mitchell was like, "If you can come, I want you to take the stage." I was like, "What?" Madness. Because three weeks before is nuts. The program's already set. Pat was like, "We can have you come," and I was like, "I have to leave New Orleans on the last flight out to New York that night at 8:00 PM." She goes, "We'll just make you opening speaker." I was like, "What is happening here? She won't let me say no. She's making me opening speaker of the three day conference, and I'm the person who's the last to even be considered sliding in. That's nuts."

I called my friend Eunique Jones Gibson, and I was like- I had written up a three paragraph email to Pat declining once again, and the email was all about like, "Pat, thank you so much for thinking about me. I would love to take the TED stage. I'm just not ready yet. Please think by me for the next one. Next one."

ELIZABETH

Which is such a thing that women do, by the way. I've written seven page apologies for not being able to do something. We have to stop. You can just say no. But anyway, go ahead.

LUVVIE

Three paragraphs of me saying no. Three.

ELIZABETH

You can just say, "No thanks." But anyway, go ahead.

LUVVIE I was about the press send and something was like, "Call Eunique," and I called Eunique. I said, "So here's what's happening. TED is in three weeks. They want me to be opening speaker. Everybody else has already had a coach. Everybody has already had their talk rehearsed. I would need to-" In between I still had six more speaking engagements for TED even happened. I was like, "In between all my talks, I'd have to like rehearse this new talk that I have to come up with and all this stuff and I'm afraid I'm going to bomb-"

ELIZABETH Just so you guys know, people prepare their TED Talks for literally a year. It's the Olympics of public speaking. You don't just write something on the airplane on your way to- You know? You don't.

LUVVIE [inaudible 00:38:44] And I literally was like, "I'm afraid I'm going to get on the stage and I'm going to bomb. I'm afraid that because I don't have the prep that I need, I will basically kill this opportunity in the worst way."

Eunique said to me, "Everybody ain't you." She was like, "You've been on a stage every three days. You've been speaking for the last seven years. That's been your coaching." She was like, "I need you to get off my phone and go write this talk," and she hangs up on me. She doesn't even give me a chance to be like, "But wait..." She literally was like, "Get off my phone, go write this talk and kill it in the best way. Good night," and hangs up.

I was like, "Well, okay," and I deleted the email to Pat, and the next morning on the way to the airport, I wrote the TED Talk and sent it to them as the car was pulling up to drop me off. In 45 minutes I was in this TED- I was in this ride for 45 minutes and I was like, "All right, fine. Let me put this thing together. If they say it sucks, I understand, and they can kick me out." I literally was like, "If they say it's terrible, I'll be like, 'You right.'" And I sent this talk off.

I landed in whatever city I was going and I had an email from them being like, "We love it. We actually only have one edit."

So yeah, three weeks later I get to New Orleans. I memorized the talk the night before. I actually scrapped the talk, half of it, that night before, rewrote it, sent it to them when I was on the way to the airport to go to New Orleans because I was only going to be there for 12 hours and was like, "Oh, I just made a few changes. Here you go." I rehearsed one time on stage while still holding my iPad and still deleting slides being like, "Ah, I don't need that one. Delete that one too. Delete that one too."

ELIZABETH This is making me- I'm starting to get hives.

LUVVIE Literally, I was making-

ELIZABETH Oh my God. This is causing me- I'm getting flush marks on my own chest. This is not safe. This is not okay.

LUVVIE Four hours before I took the stage, I'm still deleting slides. I was like, "Oh, delete that one. Delete that one. I don't need that anymore. Okay, make that the second one." On the stage. This is four hours before. I'm holding this iPad and I still didn't have it memorized actually, four hours

before. I was still reading the iPad. They're like, "We love it. This is great." I was like, "Oh my God."

So six o'clock came, Deborah Cox sang, and then I come on stage and the first thing that happens is my mic falls off my pocket. My mic falls off the back pocket, so the sound guy has to come back on stage and re-mic me. I'm like, "Well, hi everybody," and everybody's laughing because I was like, "Well, shit. Okay. That's how we getting started. Let's do it."

ELIZABETH That was probably a great blessing in a way, right, to naturalize the moment?

LUVVIE It was, but I was like, "How y'all doing? Y'all are looking good." And the guy's adjusting this mic pack.

Then I gave this talk and I don't know where it came from, but it felt like an out-of-body experience because the talk that I did not have memorized for hours before came out of my body like I had given it 15 times, 20 times, rehearsed it for months. It flowed. There were no arms. There was no editing magic to what you see on the TED Talk right now. What you see is the talk I gave. There was no, "Oh, we got to cut this line now because she didn't do this." What y'all saw is what I did on that stage.

The moment I said thank you, because I had a flight to catch, I went off the stage. I like was like, "Thank you." The stage manager stops me, turns me around and says, "I need you to see the standing ovation that you're getting." He tells me to go back on stage and the whole room is on its feet, like [inaudible 00:42:32]. I was like, "Oh my God," and then I was like, "Thank you guys so much," and I jump off stage again and Pat Mitchell goes, "That was incredible. Your luggage is in the car. Safe travels." And I jumped in the car and I go to the airport. I am off by seven. I land in New York.

A week later they emailed and said, "We want to feature your talk first, December 1st." A million views in one month. Now it's close to six million views. I almost didn't do this talk that has transformed my life, that has transformed a lot of people's lives, because I was afraid, and I felt convicted to talk about this and dig deeper into how fear really does serve as a self-fulfilling prophecy for the audacious lives that we want to live, like how we can not listen to it, we can not let it be the decision maker for us, it cannot be the thing that stops us from doing or saying what we're purposed to do, because you never know all the beauty that's waiting for you if you listen to that voice that's telling you you're not ready, you can't do it, your voice is not necessary. We all lose in the moments when we've made decisions based on fear.

ELIZABETH That's such an extraordinary story, Luvvie, and I think I felt it in my body because I've given a couple of TED Talks and it's not a pleasant experience. Just want to let everybody know. It's terrifying and they don't do anything to take away your terror. They spend a whole lot of time letting you know in a million different ways that they're pretty sure you're going to fuck it up. They take it so seriously. It's a huge pressure situation. What I felt when I was listening to you give that talk was, "Oh, she's just taking dictation from God here. This isn't channeling."

Now that I know the full backstory that you were writing it in the moments leading up to it, it's like, "Oh no, you're just being..." There's times in your life where you just become an antenna

and where you really are, it's not about you, it's not about your fear, you're being used for a higher purpose.

LUVVIE Yes.

ELIZABETH When that happens, it just works. It's more God, less Luvvie. It's just like, "I just need you to put your yellow blazer on and go out there and then God will talk through you."

LUVVIE That's it. But Elizabeth, another piece of that story that's not in the book is the fact that when I gave that talk, I had on \$65,000 worth of jewelry.

ELIZABETH Oh, I have that on right now.

LUVVIE Let me tell you why that was such an important piece of that talk and why that even-

ELIZABETH Why were you wearing- Wait a minute.

LUVVIE Yes.

ELIZABETH Why were you wearing \$65,000-

LUVVIE I want you to go back and watch the talk and just watch my jewelry-

ELIZABETH Oh, I'm going to.

LUVVIE Just watch my jewelry and you'll start seeing [inaudible 00:45:20]. You would just be like, "Oh."

LUVVIE Let me tell you how even that, I don't know, I cut it out of the book because I was like, "Ah, that's not necessary," but the week before my TED Talk, actually the weekend- I gave the talk on a Wednesday. On Sunday, I was actually in New York for the weekend with a friend of mine, really close friend of mine, who also happens to be a jeweler. I just mentioned it on the side, I was like, "Oh yeah, I'm doing this TED Talk." She's like, "A TED Talk? When?" I was like, "Oh, on Wednesday." She was like, "What are you wearing?" I was like, "Well, because TED uses the color red for everything, that is my favorite color, I'm going to wear a color that will look really good next to the red." That's how I decided on the yellow blazer. I was like, "Let me do yellow because if I wore red, I'll blend in with the TED sign." So I was like, "I got to wear yellow."

ELIZABETH Yep.

LUVVIE She goes, "No, but like, what are you wearing? What is your jewelry?" I was like, "Oh, I'll just wear my hoops and my regular studs." She was like, "Oh no, no. No." She was like, "You are going on this grand stage. I need you to look elevated."

I was like, and I'm very simple, I'm just like, "Mm, okay." She goes in, comes back out and lays out this jewelry in front of me. She was like, "You're wearing yellow, and what color are your pants?" I was like, "Oh, I'm going to do all black." She's like, "Okay."

She pulls out these diamonds. There's diamond earrings. She pulls out diamond rings. She pulled out a bracelet and a necklace. I'm freaking out because I'm like, "You know what? I'm not going to ask the question I want to ask." Which is, what is all of this worth? I was like, "I'm not going to do it," but she was like, "Here's what I need you to do." She said, "The earrings, put them on now. Don't take it off until you're done with the TED Talk." I said, "You want me to wear these earrings now?" She's like, "Because you can't travel with this in your pocket. It can't just be in your bag." I was like, "Oh my gosh." She made me put on earrings. She was like, "Okay," and she gave me the rest of the stuff.

When I had to go back to New York, right after the talk for the conference, I called her immediately. I said, "I'm in New York. Come get these from me."

ELIZABETH "Take these out of my ears."

LUVVIE When she comes to get them from me, I go, "Okay, so now can you tell me how much this jewelry was worth?" She goes, "Well, those earrings are black diamonds with white diamonds around them. They're about \$30,000." But the ring I wore was [stacked four 00:47:43] and she was like, "That's about 10,000." She was like, "Your necklace, which actually didn't show," because I had on the high neck [inaudible 00:47:49], "was these gray diamonds, was another 10." I was just like, "Holy smokes. First of all, you trusted me with this stuff." That's one. That was like, "Whoa." But the most important piece of that is that you surround yourself with people who see you bigger than you see yourself.

ELIZABETH Yeah. Yeah.

LUVVIE Because she was like, "We need to make sure you're elevated." I was like, "I'm fine with my little stuff." And she was like, "No, no, no. You are now on this grand stage."

ELIZABETH That's right.

LUVVIE That means you need to show up somewhat different. And this is going to be a video that lists for how long? So what she did in that moment, that I didn't realize I needed... Like her loaning me that elevation also now allows people to watch that video and be like, "Okay, so she's not playing." Even though it's a shallow thing, it allows people to- [crosstalk 00:48:36].

ELIZABETH But you feel it. Dustin Hoffman said that 90% of getting into character is the right costume.

LUVVIE Yes.

ELIZABETH Like when he was in was *Midnight Cowboy*, he said as soon as he found that leather jacket, that scuzzy leather jacket, he became Ratso Rizzo. He put it on and it's like, "Oh, this is easy. All I have to do is wear this and this is who I am." You knew what you had on and it means something. It's a way to... This is why I always tell people if they're in a creative block, I've got this in *Big Magic* where I write about, get dressed up.

It makes me mental when people say my life's dream is to have a job where I can be at home in my pajamas all the time. I'm like, "What do you think that's telling your work?" Honor your work

by showing up, like wash your hair, take that... you all hear me right now? All of you take that fucking scrunchie out of your hair, right? Your life will never change as long as you have that scrunchie in your hair and those pajama bottoms on at 2:30 in the afternoon. Come on. There's like a thing that it does. Your grandmother knew this by the way that she dressed when you talked about her 61st birthday party and all gold and seven days of celebration. It's like, "No, this is my worth. This is worth."

LUVVIE It's my worth. And sometimes you got to fake it. So I was like, "I don't care." I said, "Even if I said trash on that stage, you all would be like, 'She looked good. She looked good'." Okay. "At least she looked good." So whatever that thing is, your security blanket... It might not be diamonds. It might not be something, but your security blanket needs to stay with you. So I have a few. My red lipstick is one of them. If I put on my red lipstick, I might have on sweat pants, which I actually do have on. But, if I put on red lipstick, I know it's time for me to show up. Right?

If I have on a hat of choice, I'm like, "I know I'm flying." No, my hair is not combed, okay? Right? So there are things that you can put in place. And then I also had JudgeyPop on my chest. I have my JudgeyPop pin on my chest. So, walk in the room with the things that you have to walk in. Don't make it feel like "I'm being shallow". Be shallow. We need it. Wear some cute shoes. So for me, shoes are my other security blanket. I'm like, "Whether or not you like what I'm saying, my shoes going to be fly."

ELIZABETH I hear you. I was at a conference once where I got so blindsided. It was at this weird conference in Italy. And they had a guy get on stage after me who was a professor, to refute me. And I was like, "Wait, no one told me this was happening." He came on to basically slam my work. And I was like, "This was not... I was not made aware of this." But I remember sitting in the front row and I had these new Miu Miu [inaudible 00:51:14] ballet slippers on. And they had these bright shiny diamonds. And I thought, "I'm just going to focus on my shoes. They're good."

LUVVIE [inaudible 00:51:23] jump on stage and snatch you off it.

ELIZABETH I have the best shoes on in this entire room and that's why it's going to be good. And the sense it... I was going to tell you this story too. What you remind me of is I went on the Oprah Winfrey tour a couple of years ago and that's a whole other level of stadium tour.

LUVVIE Right. That's new levels.

ELIZABETH 20,000 people, Oprah sitting in the front audience, 45 minute talk where you just are there to hold that basketball stadium, you know? While Oprah's is watching you to be like, "These are my people. Here you go. I'm giving them to... for 45 minutes. Inspire them." And I'm pretty comfortable public speaking at this point but I had an experience that was so incredible. I was standing backstage. I've never had such a physiological reaction to fear as I had in that moment. They were doing... and like your face is on the JumboTrons.

I mean, it's just so insane. And this big music is drumming and they're doing this introduction. And my knees were... I had heard about knee knocking fear. I'd never... My legs were shaking so much my knees were knocking. And I was like, "This is visible." You know what I mean? I'm going

to walk out. My legs are visibly shaking and I had never had something where I felt like I was so out of control of my body, you know?

LUVVIE Yep.

ELIZABETH And I was standing back there and I'm like, "What am I going to do?" And I had this thought and it went just like this... And it's again, it was a download from God or it was a download from something that just came and said, "There are moments in a woman's life where the best gift that she can give..." And it's all women in that audience, right? 20,000 women.

LUVVIE Yes.

ELIZABETH "There are moments in a woman's life where the very best gift that she can give to another woman as an act of love is to let them see your vulnerability."

LUVVIE Yes.

ELIZABETH Not today mother fuckers.

LUVVIE Not today.

ELIZABETH Not today mother fuckers. This is not that day. You go out there right now and you show them what it looks like to stand, where you deserve to be, on a stage in a platform where you were invited and if you trust Oprah and she trusts you, then you're supposed to be here. And it's like, it just dropped out. All of that stuff just dropped out because there are times where the greatest gift that we can give to each other as women is to share our vulnerability. And then there are times where it's like, "No, now I want to show you what it looks like when I own everything that I am and everything that I have earned."

LUVVIE That's it.

ELIZABETH And I take my space on the stage where I belong and that... There's a lot of that in here.

LUVVIE I wrote this book and I didn't have the language for it so succinctly, until probably halfway through my press tour. I realized that I wanted to constantly, with my work, with this book, with how I show up in the world, I want to constantly loan people courage.

ELIZABETH Yeah.

LUVVIE I want them to think about my stories and my words in the moments when they want to do the thing that feels too big. When they want to ask for the raise or they want to have that tough conversation, they want to stand in front of the 20,000 people and they're not sure if they can handle it. But I want me to loan everybody courage and make them do something they might not have done but they're worthy of. We're so constantly beat down in this world, especially as women. People want us to walk with humility, which often they're asking us to be self-deprecating to a fault, which I don't subscribe to.

People want us to self-sacrifice for the greater good. No, no, no, no. Be courageous for you first for the greater good, right? And then people then will say like, "Well, don't make money because that means you're being greedy." No, no, no. I want to make money so then I can now give it away to people who need it. So I can now hire more women onto my team. My team is all women. So yeah, that's what I want to do for those moments. The 20,000 moments. Because I remember... I know what it feels like. For my TED talk, I was sweating buckets, sweating buckets. I remember standing backstage being like, "Oh my God, do I have this memorized? Oh my God, this is the biggest talk of my career yet. Oh my God, do I have it?"

And just like you said, a dictation from God walking on that stage, my legs stopped shaking. When I stepped on that red carpet, that red rug, my legs stopped shaking. And I was like, "Okay." And then I gave the talk of a lifetime. And then here we are three and a half years later, having these conversations. Everything about that talk led me to where I am today. To the fact that I had called this book, *Professional Troublemaker: The Fear-Fighter Manual* and then went back and watched my talk and realized my first four words in the talk is "I'm a professional troublemaker." I didn't realize that until after the book was already titled.

ELIZABETH Right.

LUVVIE So those moments, those big moments that we've all said, "No" to the next big one, please say. "Yes."

ELIZABETH Agreed. Please say, "Yes."

Imagine being in an online space where people's foolishness doesn't make you want to fight the air. That might sound impossible with your current choices for social media, but I was sick of wading through nonsense to find like-minded people, so I created my own online community. And if you are the kind of person who is striving to be a professional troublemaker and fight fear, we need you to join us in that community, because you need people to cheer you on.

LuvvNation is my online community and app that is a safe space in a dumpster fire world. It's the place for the most thoughtful, funny, most chill deficient people on these interwebs. We're a community that comes together to make each other better with curated conversations, opportunities to connect, and challenges to help us transform and do better in every area of our lives. So, I want you to come in there, join us. Become a citizen of LuvvNation. So go to luvvnation.com, that's luvvnation.com L-U-V-V-N-A-T-I-O-N. Download the app in the App Store or on Android, it's on iOS and Android and come on through! All right. Back to the podcast.

ELIZABETH Let's talk about craft. Let's talk about writing. This is a book club where I always want to honor the writer and not just the message. You say in this book that it took you until you had had a blog for nine years, a very successful blog for nine years, before you had the courage to call

yourself a writer. What were you doing? What do you think you were actually literally doing during those nine years?

LUVVIE I would be like-

ELIZABETH What is that? Where did that come from? Because I know a lot of people who follow me are writers and don't have the courage to call themselves that, even though it's what they're doing. It's what you're literally doing.

LUVVIE What you're doing.

ELIZABETH And I wanted to know what was the turning point where you finally had the courage to do it? And how has the writing process changed for you from those early days where you were "Okay, I'm not going to be a medical student. I'm not going to be working in this marketing field. I'm going to be trying this new thing of blogging." Has your comfort levels changed with... What's your relationship with writing now? I asked you a lot of questions in that one question. You can pick up any of them that you like.

LUVVIE Oh no, I'll answer all of them. So yeah, it took me nine years to call myself a writer after I started blogging, because I'd be like, "Oh, I blog. Oh, I have a blog. Oh, I write sometimes." That's how I described myself.

ELIZABETH Right.

LUVVIE Because I felt the title of writer was too big for me to wear. I was like, "A writer is Toni Morrison. Maya Angelou is a writer. How can I call myself the same thing those icons called themselves? I don't have the right to that," because I was like "Writers are novelists. They are journalists." And I was not that. I was the girl who was sitting behind a computer screen, talking about the world as I saw it. I was like, "That's not a writer. That's just somebody with a blog." That idea that a title is too big for us to wear... It's like wearing somebody's coat. It's because we don't know that we are worth it.

If we are doing the work, we are writers. If I'm writing every day, I'm a writer. So we're often afraid of taking credit for work we haven't done. And then we're afraid of what comes with the title. Okay, so if I'm a writer, that means I can fail. If I'm a writer that means... does that mean I have to be serious? If I'm a writer, how do I make money at that? So all the uncertainties that came with that title, I wasn't ready to own, even though I was doing all of it. It changed when I found myself at the Academy Awards 2012- I was doing [crosstalk 00:58:54].

ELIZABETH That's a great opening to a sentence, by the way. Like you do, you found yourself at the Academy Awards.

LUVVIE I found myself, by myself-

ELIZABETH With your \$65,000 worth of jewelry.

LUVVIE I didn't even have the-

ELIZABETH I know, I know.

LUVVIE I borrowed a dress. I borrowed a dress. And I was like, okay... Because a Hollywood producer who read my blog, reached out to me a few months before the Academy Awards and said, "Would you like to do press coverage at the awards? I love your perspective about different things that you're seeing. It would be fun to see how you kind of cover this." And I said, "Yeah." So I got credentialed for the red carpet and backstage. A lot of journalists, they go home after the red carpet. I end up backstage eating Wolfgang Puck shrimp and chocolates, okay? Next to journalists from CNN. Here I am eating the shrimp and seeing all these journalists typing and filing reports and me being like, "I'll just tweet whenever I feel like it." And my sister texts me and goes, "Mom just called me and said she hasn't seen a tweet from you in 20 minutes." Mom knows what Twitter is? What?

And it was the first time my mom acknowledged my career that I didn't even know I had. But mostly it was the fact that I said, "My words got me in this room just like it got everybody else who is in here. And I have spent so much time denying it. I spent so much time doubting it. Why would I not call myself a writer now? Look where you have found yourself." But it was because I finally run out of excuses to not call myself a writer. You don't have to be at the Academy Awards doing press to call yourself a writer. You don't have to have a blog for nine years to call yourself a writer.

ELIZABETH There is no state license to it. It's not like being a manicurist.

LUVVIE There is not.

ELIZABETH You actually get to say it.

LUVVIE But that's why. That's why we all struggle with when it's time to say it. Because you're like, "There's no credential that says I am this. There's nothing that shows that without a reasonable doubt, I can say I am this title," but I think that should also free us to use it. If you are somebody who's been writing every day, who wakes up thinking about words, who processes things in that way, you are a writer and you deserve to call yourself a writer. If you have taken beautiful portraits and you find value and you realize this is your gift, you're a photographer. I think one of the things that we do when we don't own these titles is we don't honor our gifts. We don't honor and give credit to the gift we have because I understand that I am a gifted writer but this gift was given to me before I showed up here.

ELIZABETH Yeah.

LUVVIE And when I finally said, "I'm a writer," everything I was afraid of was moved out the way. It was like God and the universe were like, "We were just waiting for you to say this thing so we can give you what we have for you." So we have to make sure we don't spend all this time doubting the gift that we have because we don't think we're ready yet. Just own it and then the jacket will fit you eventually, even if it feels big right now, just try it on. The jacket will fit in a bit. You'll go, "Yeah, I am a writer."

ELIZABETH It's all the wrong people who are humble.

LUVVIE That's... That part. That part. That part.

ELIZABETH And it's all the wrong people who have self-confidence in the world. You know, it's just true. I'm just think-

LUVVIE So what happens when they both merge? When the right people start having self-confidence and the wrong people start doing the work that they need to do.

ELIZABETH Right.

LUVVIE So those of you who are sitting here doubting your work, you're probably the right person who needs to have the confidence because you've spent so much time honing your craft because you always want to get better. That's where the imposter syndrome comes in and helps us, right? So you should be confident and don't think you owe anybody humility. I don't consider myself humble in the way other people might think. I will tell you in a minute, "I'm an amazing writer and a speaker. I wrote a book that is the best work that I've ever done." And I can say that clearly but my humility comes in knowing that I am part of a legacy of women writers, of women who broke in ceilings so I can be here.

LUVVIE I'm part of a legacy of my grandmother who showed me what it's like to be a bold woman without apology. I'm the legacy of the work that my mom did to make sure we came here for the better life that she wanted for us. So my humility is based on the fact that I know that I'm able to be this person and do this work because of the people and the systems that have supported me.

LUVVIE I'm not an amazing speaker writer by myself. I am a testament of all the mentors who have said my name in rooms that I'm not in, who have been like, "Have you thought about Luvvie for this?" So all of that helps me now do the work that I do. So I don't do it alone. That's where my humility comes in. But I need us, especially women to double down on owning your gifts. Double down on letting people know what the gift is so they can know, "Oh, that's where she can help me with my work" or "Oh, that's a gap that she can help us fill." We got to cheer lead ourselves as we're cheerleading everybody else too.

ELIZABETH I want to talk about dreaming. You have this chapter of this book called Dream Audaciously and you say in it that dreaming big is in itself a privilege.

LUVVIE Yes.

ELIZABETH Which I want you to break that down for us because I think that's a really important thing. But you also write, "Sometimes we must dream so big that we make people uncomfortable. That is actually when you know you're doing what you should, when you mention something to someone and they gasp. Yes, lose your breath on my behalf." Oh, I love that so much. I'm really fascinated with this. I've only recently begun to understand, especially in women's lives, the difference between dreams and fantasy.

One thing that a teacher who I really admire broke down for me and really helped me get this, is that if you're raised in a family or a culture where your dreams from the beginning are

considered to not have any importance, right? Where dreaming is not allowed to you. Where you're just expected to follow a very particular, very narrow path. There's a part of us that has to dream in order to be a healthy human being. And what happens is it metastasizes into fantasy. And then you just spend your life... And fantasy is also a way to check out of a very sad reality. So I just want to be really clear as we're talking about this, there's a really big difference between a life of dreaming and a life of fantasy. When you're in fantasy, you don't have to do anything. That's one thing about it. You're just like, "Tra-la-la. Everything's going to change. Somebody's going to come around and save me. Someday I'll live in a palace."

Like it's just this... And it often has to do being rescued externally. There's a fantasy that somebody is going to come and be your hero, that somebody is going to come and solve all your problems, that you're going to win the lottery. So I just wanted to start off by just reminding everybody that we're not advocating here for living a life of fantasy because that's demeaning to your spirit.

LUVVIE Yeah, yeah.

ELIZABETH And it also shows a tremendous absence of self-faith, self-worth and an ability to think that you have any agency at all over your own life. Dreaming is something else. Dreaming is muscular. It's powerful and it's actually based weirdly with its feet in reality. It's in a reality of potential but it's still in reality. I wanted to just talk about what you mean when you say dream so big that people like lose their breath by it. And when was the first time in your life that you felt that you were really aiming for that?

LUVVIE That dream versus fantasy thing is a move that I do think... People accidentally think having audacious dreams is fantasy automatically. I love that point you just made it. That's what I'm processing right now. I'm like, "That's a really good point," because to live in fantasy is to want impossible things, right? Like impossible things. I want to be able to fly without wings. That's fantasy, okay? That's fantasy.

ELIZABETH I want to have thick hair.

LUVVIE Listen, I want to have a big old giant bootie, even though I could get surgery if I wanted that. But also, that's actually not fantasy because, surgery. But yeah, I think we tend to think that dreaming big could become fantasy very quickly, but that's because we have now weaponized reality. We have created tiny boxes of what's possible so that anything outside the tiny box looks like fantasy. That's the problem. Anything outside the tiny box. One of the things I did 2013... You said when was the first time I dreamed big. I'm not sure, but over the years I would put certain things on Twitter just because. I would just be like "I want this thing. I'm going to say it out loud." I remember probably 2012, I tweeted "One day I will meet Oprah and she will already know my name."

Me and Oprah have been in the room with each other over the years, at least 12 times. When I was nine years old, when I first came to the US, my class actually did a field trip to Harpo Studios. I was chosen of one of 10 people to go. Some of my classmates actually ended up on the show. After the show they gave us a tour of the studio. I remember walking by Oprah but I didn't introduce myself. I was just like "Ah, it's Oprah," internally. That was the first time I've

ever been in the room with Oprah. But over the years, I've been in multiple rooms with her... the ESSENCE Black Women in Hollywood. There was one year where she was sitting at a table with Shonda Rhimes. And I was like, "I can only introduce myself to one. You know what? I'm going to introduce myself to Shonda right now. Shonda already knows my name. Okay, I'm going to go up to Shonda." So I introduced myself to Shonda. So in 2016, when I got the SuperSoul 100 notification and they emailed me, I thought it was fake. I deleted it.

And if somebody texts me like, "Did you see the email?" And I was like, "Oh, snap. That was real? For real? Oprah actually knows my name?" And we talked in the back and she says, "Hey, Luvvie." And those tweets that I sent over the years came true. That's a dream that could feel like fantasy. If you feel like reality is this small. I didn't know how Oprah was going to know my name. I didn't.... I was just like, "One day I will meet her and she will know my name." I didn't know how she... There was no plan to get there.

I think the necessity for dreaming audaciously is to blow the box. It's to blow the box. We live in this small box every single day and we need to live beyond the box and beyond boxes we can't even see right now. In the example I use in the book is of Summit. Summit is wild. And there's a line that I wish I had actually put in the book that I'm like, "Damn it. That was a whole [hit inaudible 01:10:06]," because the people of summit were these group of guys who went to this mountain.

ELIZABETH Yeah, tell everybody what this is because it's bananas.

LUVVIE It's nuts.

ELIZABETH I didn't know about it fully until you wrote about it. I'm going to see if I can find it.

LUVVIE Oh, the book's fact checkers went back to make sure I wasn't lying. That's why that footnotes exists because I'm like, "Just in case you all think I'm lying, this is fact." So a group of guys invited their friends to a cabin in the mountains for a couple of weekends. They had a great time. They had great conversation and they went back for two more weekends and they go, "Man, we really love our cabin retreats that we've been doing. We should buy Powder Mountain, the mountain it's on." When we go on trips and we have an amazing time, we might be like, "Let me buy the mug that we used for breakfast."

ELIZABETH At most, "Maybe I'll get a condo in this villa, someday, when I retire."

LUVVIE Yeah, "Maybe I'll even buy the mattress I slept on. That was great."

ELIZABETH Yeah.

LUVVIE We will think to buy the mattress. They thought to buy a mountain. That is privilege because they never even had the small box.

ELIZABETH Yeah.

LUVVIE I know for a fact... I have never even realized that mountains were for sale. I wouldn't even think of it as a possibility. So the privilege to dream big is actually something that changes everything. The fact that they thought buying a mountain was possible, made buying a mountain possible and they end up buying it for \$40 million. But imagine if they never thought the mountain was even possible. All we think about... We're dreaming of the mattress. They're dreaming of the mountain because they are white men who have never been told less.

ELIZABETH Oh Luvvie. What a line. Geez.

LUVVIE Yes, that's the line I wish I put in the book. They were dreaming of the mountain.

ELIZABETH [crosstalk 01:11:48] I have a few questions that I'd love to ask these guys. This is... I put it... I have the best margin notes in your book by the way, because you're so funny. But the line was, "How did the conversation about buying the mountain even go? Did anyone laugh at the first person who brought up the idea? Were they and on what? When they reached, "Okay, let's buy the mountain." consensus, were they afraid of this idea?

Who do you call when you're looking to buy a mountain?

All of this, it's like... And you write, "The audacity of unshackled white men is massive. The only way I wish to be more like them is by having the lack of oppression that gives me the freedom, gumption and unmitigated gall to think it's even possible to own a mountain." Luvvie, Luvvie, Luvvie.

LUVVIE How do you buy a mountain? Just think about this shit. I'm literally like, "What was the person who said, 'Hey guys, we should try to buy this mountain.', and what was the response they got?" Because imagine if the first response they got was, "You've lost your shit, get out of here." Or if their friend was like, "I don't know, let's look into it." How... It changes us, also who's around us.

LUVVIE Who gives us now extra audacity? The person who goes, "We can figure it out. We can just do some research. We'll figure out how to buy a mountain." But we've never been taught that mountains were possible. Meanwhile, for them, they were like, "Why not try to buy mountain?" That type of audacity comes from lack of oppression. That is freedom from lack of oppression.

Lack of being told something wasn't possible. People tell us, asking for raise is impossible because we're not going to get it. These people decided to buy a whole mountain. So I just want us to start, now, dreaming of the mountains. Like what are the mountains? Not the mattresses. The mattresses is too small. The mountain is what we need to be at. We need to be sitting and trying to figure that out like, "Okay." Because the world that we live in is actually built up by the people who think about the mountains.

ELIZABETH I saw, Luvvie, a couple months ago on Instagram. You posted something and you said... And I'm not pretending to quote you, but the general idea of it was... And I think it was like you put up a cover of the book because the book was in pre-order stage. And you said something like, "I want everybody to buy my next New York Times bestselling book now." And I remember being like, "Wow, that's really cool." That is really cool because I was raised, you must never say something like that. You must never say something like that. And I was like, "That's fucking great."

And I ordered it because I was like, "I want to be part of that." I didn't feel like it separated you from me. I felt like it connected me into your dream, where I got to plug myself into that and be like, "I want to support that. I want to support somebody who... I want to support a Black woman who walks through this world and says, 'This is the next thing that I'm going to do. And it's going to be a New York Times best seller, just like the last thing I did. Hold my earrings and hold my \$30,000 earrings.'"

LUVVIE Hold my earrings. I got them earrings back for my launch. And I wore them for my book launch.

ELIZABETH I was going to say, "I hope you got those earrings back." And I think that when you said you want to lend your courage to people, it's such a generous way to live that way. Because every woman who liberates herself from the smallness of the box, liberates another. Each one, free one. It's not even just each one, teach one. It's each one, free one. And the more that we live that out loud... I joked at the beginning of this conversation that, "I'm sorry for you guys that I always have to do my learning in public." because I was having trouble with Instagram. And somebody said, "We're grateful that you do." I'm grateful that you do your courage in public because it needs to be seen to be contagious.

LUVVIE Yeah. No, that's big. I mean, for me... So my first book, I remember I told my agent, I said, "I want this book to sell 50,000 copies." and he laughed at me. He laughed. He was like, "You know, most books don't sell over five." And I was like, "I don't know how I'm going to get there, but I'm guessing the number that I've set for myself is 50,000 copies, because it's going to make 50,000 people laugh. It's going to make 50,000 people get their lives together." And he was like, "Listen, it's still a success even if you don't get 50,000 copies." And I was like, "I want 50,000." And book one, when it crossed the 100,000 mark, I was like...

ELIZABETH Who's laughing now?

LUVVIE Okay. For book two, I was like, "Since I'm saying I want to dream audaciously, one million is what I want. I want to loan one million people courage. I want one million troublemakers to exist because of this book. I want a million people to get a raise. A million people to have a tough conversation. A million people to say, "You know what? I'm going to dream of mountains. Not just mattresses." A million people to say, "I can walk in a room when my voice is necessary." That's what I want for this. And the number feels wildly audacious. I have no clue how I'm going to get there. I'm just like, "I'm just going to put it out there." because part of this whole dreaming audaciously is breaking ourselves out of the boxes that exist around us. The things that tell us that, that just feels unrealistic. That's not fantasy.

That's not fantasy. That's just a big dream and be around the people who say, "A million? We can do that. Let's figure out how to do that." Not the people who go, "I don't know." You want the people who go, "We can figure that out." And it doesn't mean you failed if you don't make your number, it just means that the box that you currently in, you're saying, "I want to see beyond this box and see what can happen because I'm no longer in the cage." And I just want us all to be freer. In a world that's constantly telling us not to be, we still have to wish and work as if all of our boxes can be shattered at any given time. And our hope is like, "We're shattering boxes so the people who come behind us, they don't have to work this hard. We've worked way too hard to get where we got to."

I want my life to make somebody else's easier, where somebody goes, "Well, Luvvie was here so therefore, instead of having to work four times as hard, now I only have to work twice as hard." or "I only have to work just as hard as the other white dude, as opposed to more." and I think that is a value of the work that we do. And that's why I've respected you for such a long time, Liz, because you've learned out loud. You've been the forever student who's like, "I've never called myself the expert. I'm just telling you how I've gone through different phases of my life." and you've loaned people courage in so many moments.

My two-week break, I was like, "I want a mini eat, pray, love two weeks where I'm just going to go sit in somebody's garden and just not care about what's happening, but just go back inward and figure out what I need for my next season." That is because you've modeled some of that, too. So that's why I deeply respect you, your work as a writer, your work as a leader, is you're forever evolving and giving yourself the permission to dream of what's possible for you that might not already exist.

ELIZABETH Thanks, Luvvie. That means a lot. Thank you. I'm honored. I was going to say humbled, but we're not doing that.

LUVVIE Honored.

ELIZABETH I'm honored. I'm honored. Thank you. And you know what I was going to say? I don't think I've ever shared this publicly, but I'm going to tell you what I'm most proud of in my work of anything that's ever happened. I am most proud of the fact that there is now a term that is globally understood for what it means when a woman says she needs a break from her life, her marriage, her kids, she needs to reinvent herself, and she's going to go by herself to be alone in a foreign place. There was never a term for that. That thing didn't exist, right? And now it's like universal shorthand where people will say, and they'll say it, "I'm having my own little eat, pray, love. I'm giving myself a month of eat, pray, love." Or someone will say, "My daughter's gone for the year. She's doing her eat, pray, love." It's become like a thi... That's my... I feel like that's my greatest legacy, is to have named that so that people can be like, "Oh, you can do that?"

LUVVIE I'm telling you, it is the best shorthand. What are you doing at the end of April? I'm going to have my eat, pray, love moment in a spa resort somewhere. And nobody has to ask, "What does that mean?"

ELIZABETH Everybody knows what it means. And it means you won't be hearing from me.

LUVVIE That's exactly what it means. And that is the best shorthand.

ELIZABETH Yeah.

LUVVIE ...ever. For such a big experience, it's captured in three words. I'm going to eat, pray, love.

ELIZABETH It makes me so happy. Oh, Luvvie, you're just so fantastic. There's so many other things I want to... I just want to read a couple of my favorite lines that you have. One is that you said, "If I were a superhero, I'd be super independent. I don't need anything from anybody. I haven't asked anyone, my mom included, for money since I was 17 years old." and then you discuss how

that's actually a shortcoming. That's in the way that our... What we think of as our greatest assets and our greatest strengths, if left unchecked, become the things that prevent us from moving forward.

And she's got a whole chapter in the book, you guys, about just learning how to ask for help, how to receive gifts, how to be on the other side. And then this one made me just stop and be like, "Oh, you just read me so hard." I gasped, you said "Generosity also helps us to hide our vulnerability." I was like, "Oh, have you been reading my journals?" I'm so much more comfortable being the... Just let me be the provider, the giver, then I never have to feel weak. I never have to feel like I owe anybody anything. I get to prove how good I am because of the insecurity I have that I might not be. I just felt like, "Whew."

LUVVIE So a lot of this book, I actually was... I wrote this book for me. Truly when I say that, I wrote this book for me, as a reminder for me. Because all the things that I talk about, all the shortcomings in here are mine. That I'm just like, "I need to put these on paper so that when I face these moments, I go back to read it and go, 'Remember when you said...'" So when you're saying that I'm like, "I suck at asking for stuff. I hate it." because I don't like the idea of being beholdng somebody else. I don't like the idea... And I have a Captain-Save-A-Hoe complex. I always love to save. I'm like, that in itself... My therapist was like, "What is... That is not for you to... You're not supposed to save a person." And I'm like, "But I want to help." So that captain-

ELIZABETH [crosstalk 01:22:48] [Brene Brown 01:22:49] always says that her therapist taught her that the expression is not "Let go and let Brene".

LUVVIE "Let go and let Brene", correct. I'm going to let go and let Luvvie. I got this.

ELIZABETH I got this. At best, John and I are... We're coworkers, right? We're peers, you know?

LUVVIE And it's like, "Whoa", like unpacking that in therapy too. Like "What about us? Why is it that we are only feeling good when we're doing? Why is it that we constantly put ourselves on the line and on the hook to do more? Why don't we feel enough by just being?" So it's a constant struggle.

ELIZABETH My favorite line in the entire book, "My face is basically my outside voice." About why you can't lie and why you are unable to hide your facial expressions.

LUVVIE I'm the worst...

ELIZABETH [crosstalk 01:23:44] Oh, Luvvie, you're so good. It's so good.

LUVVIE I'm the worst, Liz. I can not lie because my face is so... If I'm pissed and you asked me, "Are you okay?" and I go, "Yeah, I'm fine. Hold on just a second. Yeah, I'm fine." It's like, "No, you're not fine. You don't even look fine. Come on, stop it." So I can't even lie. My face just be telling all my business, all my business.

ELIZABETH I had a boyfriend who said about me, "You have the opposite of poker face. You have like miniature golf face."

LUVVIE Miniature golf face.

ELIZABETH You would be the worst spy, like the absolute worst. Another favorite line, "As you evolve, you should not let people weaponize the old you against the new you."

LUVVIE Yes. Yes. People love reminding us of who we used to be, of our old shortcomings. So you're like, "Okay, so if I grow but you don't recognize my growth, why did I grow?"

ELIZABETH Yeah. You have to remind people some time of... Sometimes you have to remind people of where you came from, and other times you have to remind them of where you got to.

LUVVIE That part. I always tell people that they see Luvvie now, I'm the very much calmer version of myself because old me would let you have it for way less. I'd be like, "Listen, don't forget my sharp tongue. I still remind you of where I'm from if you push me enough. I always tell folks, "Don't get yellow blazer, Ted-Talk Luvvie messed up out here. Go have her thinking she doesn't have it... I'm not [crosstalk 01:25:08] this sharp tongue.

ELIZABETH Yeah, just to be clear, the Luvvie that you're getting now is the very gentle, soft version of Luvvie that's [inaudible 01:25:15].

LUVVIE I can let you have it. Don't forget that version, okay. I'm always ready, all right. So I can be like, look... Because people see my Ted Talk me and they think I'm super fuzzy. I'm like, "Listen, I'm also a savage, okay. I will also have the sharp tongue." So when people bring disrespect to my platforms, I'm like, "Listen, you catch me on the wrong day. I'm going to let you have it in a very right way." [crosstalk 01:25:36]

ELIZABETH You know what we need are friends who are like that too. There's... [Glennon 01:25:40] and I have a thing that we always say to each other. There's a line... There's a movie called "The Town" with Ben Affleck and Jeremy Renner, where they play south-y Boston gangsters and they've been friends since they were kids. And there's a scene where Ben Affleck shows up in the middle of the night at Jeremy Renner's apartment and just knocks on the door, and Jeremy's just staring at the TV. They're just thugs, right? And he burst in and he goes, "We got to go hurt some people and I need you to come with me." And without even blinking, Jeremy goes, "Who's car are we going to take?"

LUVVIE You know what? That's totally Glennon. That's actually also Glennon because Glennon be... Oh my God, we were ready to go. You need those friends. You need the friends who's like...

ELIZABETH Like every time she invites, it's beyond a yes. It's like, "I don't even know who the people are that we're going to up. Yes, I'm going with you." Like that's the only question.

LUVVIE [crosstalk 01:26:28] I'm going. Let's go. I think that's friendship. I must be able to fight for you, with you. You know what I mean? The claws will come out because, also, I need people to understand that as we are on this journey, we also come with a community of people who are watching our back, who will make sure that we're good. And I think it deters people from coming crazy at me sometimes. They're like, "Oh, she has crazy people also. You don't want the

smoke. Okay, you don't want the smoke." And I think people be like, "No, let me respect myself."

ELIZABETH Luvvie, I'd talk to you till God leaves Chicago but I'm going to wrap it up. I want to say a thing and then I want to ask you to read. I want to leave on your voice and let you know what I think is the most beautifully written piece of the book. But before we get to that, I just want to say how I see you. So, when I was writing my novel, *The Signature of All Things*, part of it is set in the South Pacific, in the 19th century. And I did a lot of research on traditional Tahitian culture. And I found out that there was a figure in the community who was called the Rau'i, R-A-U-I, and this person knew the lineage of every single person in the community and all the way back to the beginning of time. And they weren't warriors, but they ran alongside the warriors in battle. And whenever anybody's energy was flagging, they would shout to them who they were.

So they would say, "You are...", and then they'd read their lineage. "You are the child of this, and the son of this, and you are the grandson of the one who killed the great warrior and this and then you are..." Their job was just like a hype man, but also just to go deep, going back to where we started this conversation with the Iraqi, this reminder of what you have in you. I see you as holding that position in your community that you've created online, and your readers, and in the women, myself included, who look to you for courage and inspiration that you, through the way that you live, you remind us of who we are.

LUVVIE That is beautiful. That is beautiful.

ELIZABETH Thank you for that.

LUVVIE No, thank you for that.

ELIZABETH And on that note, will you read page 66? And then we will let you go on your eat, pray, love for the next couple weeks. Well earned.

LUVVIE [crosstalk 01:28:45] I still have a week or two. Right?

ELIZABETH A very well earned eat, pray, love.

LUVVIE I still have about a week for my eat, pray, love, but I will come back with even more clarity.

ELIZABETH We always do.

LUVVIE That's what I'm saying, right? So you want me to read the piece about who we are as women?

ELIZABETH On page 66, starting with "Somewhere along the way."

LUVVIE [crosstalk 01:29:03] Yep. Yep. I got...

ELIZABETH Just about women, basically, about when women forget who they are.

LUVVIE Somewhere along the way, they told us our glitter was ashes. They told us that what we touched turned to dust, not gold. They convinced us that we bled as punishment, not purpose fulfillment. Somewhere along the way, our magic was minimized. They said we were ordinary, not walking proof of miracles. And we started believing them. We did. We let the world tell us we had to apologize for ourselves. We had to be polite, but stern. Sexy, but not too sexual. Bosses, but not bossy. Confident, but not cocky. Motherly, but not matronly.

We had to hide the rough edges they created in us and be soft, but not fluffy. And Black women? Well, we've been told we're the mule, when we are the mother of all of this. We are jewels. We are the reason for poems to be written. Sappy loves notes with metaphors that seem hyperbole, but are more grounded in truth than you know. Somewhere along the way, we were told we weren't enough, when we are truly everything. We are literally life everlasting. We are God's vessel. Science can't explain us, we're magic. And don't let nobody tell you shit. You're made of pixie dust. They just don't know what to do with it.

ELIZABETH Luvvie Ajayi Jones, I salute you. I love you. Thank you for honoring us with your words, your presence and your life.

LUVVIE Liz, I appreciate you for affirming me. The words that you wrote, that are on the back of this book. When you said "She is a force in a powerhouse, the thunder, and the lightning." I was like, "Oh my God." Your words, as a writer, has paved the way for me. It has really allowed me to see what's possible, to just live my authenticity, and pass on those lessons. And as we go through all of this stuff, as these very flawed people and leaders, I'm learning how to carry some of this because I've watched how you've done it. So I just want to say, thank you. I love you deeply. And I am so glad that we are a community.

ELIZABETH Me too.

LUVVIE That I can text you and I'm like, "Look at my life. I can text Liz Gilbert." So, thank you, and you chose this book.

ELIZABETH I'm not going to text you for the next few weeks though. Anybody who knows Luvvie, leave her alone. She needs to reach... She needs to get that source, get it from source and fill herself up with all that stuff that she then pours out on all of us. And I hope you get a deep rest, and a lot of peace, and some good food, and that you don't have to answer any questions for a couple of weeks, and just know how highly in regard we hold you, and always will. So thank you for being part of the Onward Book Club, and we'll see you in Love Nation.

LUVVIE Yeah, love you.

ELIZABETH Bye honey, love you.

LUVVIE Bye.

I've been talking about Professional Troublemaker in a lot of different settings since the beginning of the year, and it's so refreshing when I can have a conversation that brings out something from the

book that I've never thought of or expressed before in other interviews. I loved getting the chance to tell the full story of my grandmother and her amazingness, and the piece of our conversation at the end where Liz and I were talking about buying the mountain and having extra gumption that comes from lack of oppression still has me thinking about how I can keep drilling down on that idea.

And, again thank you again to Elizabeth for normalizing the Eat, Pray, Love experience and cheering me on as I was prepping to go on my Eat, Pray, Luvvie two weeks off the grid that I went on recently.

Be sure to follow Elizabeth Gilbert on social media. She's @ elizabeth_gilbert_writer on Instagram and @gilbertliz on Twitter. Also, check out the video of our conversation and the other conversations Liz has had with Black female authors at elizabethgilbert.com/onward. If you want to join her in the Onward Book Club, just follow Liz for the selections, read the books written by these dope Black women, and join in on some of those live conversations on Liz's Instagram. See you on the next episode.

Also, order my namesake book, [PROFESSIONAL TROUBLEMAKER: The Fear-Fighter Manual](#) anywhere that you buy books. I especially love when you buy it from independent bookstores. So go to ProfessionalTroublemakerBook.com for more. Because this book is game changing, and I'd say that even if I wasn't the one who wrote it.

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Until next time, have the courage to speak your truth and show up as yourself. Create good trouble.