

Luvvie Ajayi Jones:

Creating a life that is authentic, bold, and purposeful takes audacity. It takes disruption. That is what it means to be a Professional Troublemaker. Professional Troublemaker is a book, a podcast, and a life habit.

Luvvie Ajayi Jones:

I'm your host, Luvvie Ajayi Jones, bestseller of books, Aficionado of Authenticity, and Sorcerers of Side Eyes. Here to bring you perspectives, conversations, and deep dives about culture, business, life, leadership. Plus, my conversations are with world movers and change agents who have gotten where they are through their tenacity, their truth telling and commitment to making good trouble. My hope is that this show compels you to do big things in a world where we have so much to fear. Let this be an arena of audacity for you. This is the last of a series of five episodes that I'm dedicating to all things little troublemaker. Let's get into it.

Luvvie Ajayi Jones:

Who were we before the world told us that we were not good enough? Who were we before life dropped kicked us in the chest repeatedly telling us good hope was futile? Who were we before we realized we were different and that what makes us different, makes us amazing? Who were we at our purest, most hopeful, most bold, most true? I thought about how the best versions of ourselves were the little versions of us. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. We were still learning about the world, but we were mostly untainted because childhood and the privilege of youth made us really soft and malleable.

Luvvie Ajayi Jones:

We bounced back from mistakes easily. We were less likely to beat ourselves up. We smiled easier. We loved louder and fiercer. We were open-handed, open-hearted, full of wonder and hope. We had dreams that felt unrealistic. We reveled in imagination and play. We made messes and got dirty and laughed at it all.

Luvvie Ajayi Jones:

Today my first children's book, Little Troublemaker Makes a Mess, is Out Into the World. I've been picturing kids picking up their mail with their parents, opening those delivery boxes and seeing little Luvvie on the cover and diving into her story. My hope is that this story I wrote in the illustrations that Joey Spiotto created helps them see that it's okay to make mistakes and that you can channel the big feelings in your big heart in ways that can create goodness in the world around you.

Luvvie Ajayi Jones:

If you've read my second book, Professional Troublemaker, which this podcast is named after, the one that really kicked off this whole troublemaker universe that I've created, you know that I dedicated that book to my grandmother Funmilayo Faloyin. My Faloyin Was the person who was my North star when it came to learning how to take up space without apology.

Luvvie Ajayi Jones:

I watched her growing up and I saw how she showed up, and it gave me the permission to take up space unapologetically even as a six year old girl. She taught me by example that my gifts, my blessings, they're there to serve others, lift others up, and make the kind of impact in the world that will leave a gap when I'm gone.

Luvvie Ajayi Jones:

But even with those lessons that I revisited by writing both Professional Troublemaker and Rising Troublemaker, my adaptation for teens, it was writing the story for little troublemaker that helped me transport myself back and really tap into that six year old little girl who she was, what she needed, what she needed to hear, and all of that. Little Luvvie was figuring out what it looked like to push boundaries and actually be a person and use her voice in a world of adults with rules.

Luvvie Ajayi Jones:

Rules that shouldn't always like. She meant well, but she had a lot of questions. She wanted to do good things, but she made a lot of mistakes, especially when it came to using my voice to talk back to my brother, who I considered to be my arch nemesis at that point. But Little Luvvie meant well. She wanted to be good and kind, but not at the expense of who she was inside.

Luvvie Ajayi Jones:

Little Luvvie was bold, assured, clear on who she was from the time she was born. She was smart, quick with a comeback and really concerned with fairness. She was stubborn too. On my fifth birthday, I had two outfits, a gold traditional Yoruba Ashoke dress with Gele, the head tie and a black velvet and gold dress. And I didn't want to wear the Ashoke, okay, partly because it was slightly itchy, but partly because I liked the black and gold dress a little bit more.

Luvvie Ajayi Jones:

So when I had to wear that Ashoke first to cut my cake, I was not pleased. And no amount of coaxing made me smile in those pictures. I got proof y'all. I mean mugged my way through it. And finally my mom let me change into my preferred outfit. And it was then that I finally smiled. I'm a Capricorn, so I'm a true goat with all the stubbornness that comes with it. But I've always cared so much about how I've made people feel. And when I got in trouble and I reflected and realized it was really my fault, I apologize with a handwritten note. I've written my mom countless handwritten notes over the years, and I would not be shocked if she's kept them all.

Luvvie Ajayi Jones:

So that little troublemaker I've been, I wrote this book for her, the younger version of me who had great intentions but got in trouble when they didn't always translate to the actions she took. I was a true rebel with the cause. That little Luvvie still lives inside me and she just has a lot more experience and a bit more wisdom. But she still makes a mess from time to time. And I'll tell you, writing this book, talking about this character, it has been reparenting me more than I want to admit.

Luvvie Ajayi Jones:

It's been helping me heal the parts of me that is often so self-critical, the parts that can be unforgiving when I make a mistake, which I did in the first episode of this series when I uploaded the podcast file that was unedited, I beat myself up for hours because I was embarrassed. Then I thought about Little Luvvie, the girl I wrote this book for The Girl I want to protect more than anything. I really do owe that girl some grace and self-compassion, the type I give to other people. I needed to remind her and me that we can still fall on our face and be okay.

Luvvie Ajayi Jones:

That while I make sure I don't repeat the same mistakes over and over again, I can grow each time. And that my mistakes don't really define me. I'm meeting little me over and over again because that is literally

the lesson she learned in the book. I thought I was teaching little Luvvie something, but truly she's been teaching me along the way too. So as I'm talking about this book, I'm being reparented, I'm relearning the lessons inside it every day. It's making me think about me as a little kid who really just wanted to make people smile and do good things, and I need to show her some mercy.

Luvvie Ajayi Jones:

So to love her without condition is one of the lessons. I'm learning to forgive her quicker and to revel in her joy with her. So look, we going to mess up. But bad days, bad decisions, bad feelings, they don't make us bad humans, and I think we all need that reminder. So Little Troublemaker really does light my spirit up. And I think little Luvvie is just so lovable because from the first minute my illustrator Joey sent over the drafts of his character development sketches to every time we've created something for this book launch, it just makes my whole heart smile because she's really cute. Her fits are adorable. The kicks are fire. And when you read the book, whether yourself or to your kids, don't miss the pajamas at the end of the story. I Low-Key want those pajamas in real life. If I can make it happen, I'm going to let y'all know.

Luvvie Ajayi Jones:

So if you want to learn to love yourself more, I really do recommend getting a illustration of you as a child. I think you can't help but smile and want to give that person a little bit more grace. But the love comes from more than just seeing how adorable cartoon me is. It's seeing the love for my mom and for my sister who are in this story and how that comes through in the characters and in their interactions.

Luvvie Ajayi Jones:

This is truly a family story, and I've learned to revel with little me as she's having fun with these people that she loves. Because we had fun in my house and we still do. Things weren't always easy, but we loved each other and had fun being together. And that is something worth celebrating because even when we didn't have much, we had each other. And I feel like this book reflects that whole love.

Luvvie Ajayi Jones:

One thing that I've done in my career is I create the work that I need and one thing I've done is I've written the books that I've needed. So I wrote Professional Troublemaker for 30 year old me who was asked to do the biggest talk of her life, and she turned it down because she was afraid she wasn't ready for it. But a friend didn't let me tell them no. When they asked again. That Ted Talk now has over 9 million views and has been transcribed into 23 different languages and continues to change lives.

Luvvie Ajayi Jones:

Rising Troublemaker was the book I needed when I was a teenager who thought she wanted to be a doctor when she grew up because it was other people's dreams for her. The 16 year old me who needed to hear that, lean into the very thing that makes you feel different because that's your superpower. So I wrote that book for that girl.

Luvvie Ajayi Jones:

And Little Troublemaker, well that's for little Luvvie who would get in trouble for her mouth and sometimes felt it was unfair and felt misunderstood. I wrote it to celebrate her, this little brown girl with short hair and spunk for days. So as you read this book with the kids you love or maybe by yourself, look, I support that. I hope that you'll be inspired and you'll inspire them to use their voice, harness their energy to become big world changers. Even as they're tiny people. I hope you remind them that the world needs their goodness, their power, and their hope, and I hope they see themselves reflected in this story. I hope you do too, because I don't think it's just for the babies. I think it's for us also.

Luvvie Ajayi Jones:

So Little Troublemaker makes a mess written by me, luvvie Ajayi Jones and illustrated by Joey Spiotto is out everywhere books are sold today. Buy a copy for your favorite tiny rebel. Buy a copy as a gift for your friend who has a child who knows their own mind and isn't afraid to speak it. You know who that is. Grab one as a gift for the teachers in your school who are working hard to help create great adults. You'll love reading it with the kids in your life and I hope it helps you inspire them to use your voice and create good trouble.

Luvvie Ajayi Jones:

You can also get the audiobook, which is narrated by me. So go to [littletroublemakerbook.com](http://littletroublemakerbook.com) and you'll find some downloadables you can use for your kids, like a coloring sheet, a word search, and more. You'll also find some more information on how to support the book. We might have some additional goodies in there for you too, that page. All the good stuff. [Littletroublemakerbook.com](http://Littletroublemakerbook.com).

Luvvie Ajayi Jones:

I am so excited to hear how your kids are digging this book. So please tag me on social media with your thoughts, picks all of that. I'm @Luvvie everywhere and subscribe to this podcast wherever you get your fix. Apple podcast, Spotify, Google Play.

Luvvie Ajayi Jones:

And this has been my mini series on Little Troublemaker. We are going to be back to doing all things professional troublemaker, moving forward in 2023. Might take a summer break, I don't know. But that's also why I want you to subscribe to this podcast so you can know when I'm back. because I can't even promise you nothing right now about when that's going to be. I'm just saying. But I'm going to be back. Just know that I'm going to always be back.

Luvvie Ajayi Jones:

So yeah, talk to you on the next episode. I'll let y'all know when it is though. If y'all subscribe to my podcast, my newsletter, you will know when that is. All right. Bye y'all.