

PROFESSIONAL  
**TROUBLEMAKER**  
*with* LUVVIE AJAYI JONES

---

**Luvvie:** [00:00:00] How do we stop being so addicted to being busy? How?

**Dr. Joy:** So I think it is important to examine where the busyness is coming from, because for a lot of us, we want to stay busy because we are afraid of what will come up if we're quiet and still.

**Luvvie:** Hold on. Wait a minute. Oh, go ahead and say that again and drag us one more time. Please say that again.

[00:00:30] [00:01:00] [00:01:30] Hey y'all. Welcome back to my series on glory and grit of entrepreneurship. Today. I am super excited to have Dr. Joy Harden Bradford join me. She's not just a licensed psychologist, but she's also the host of the award winning podcast, Therapy for Black Girls which [00:02:00] is also a database where you can go find yourself a culturally competent therapist. Dr. Joy is celebrated for making mental health topics accessible and engaging, especially for black women. And her work has been featured in top publications like Oprah Daily, The New York Times, Essence. She's also an entrepreneur running her own business. Very successful company. With her dual expertise, she's here to share some invaluable strategies on how we can maintain [00:02:30] our mental wellness while also managing the pressures of running a business. I thought she was the right person because she's bringing to the table, the therapy, the wellness, the entrepreneurship. She's the one I said, I need to talk to Dr. Joy because not only is she a therapist, but she's also running her business. So she knows the struggles that comes with it. And so, yeah, let's dive in.

okay. Dr. Joy is in the building. How you doing?

**Dr. Joy:** I'm doing [00:03:00] alright, how are you? Mmm.

**Luvvie:** talking about the glory and the grit of entrepreneurship, I was like, I got to talk to Dr. Joy because let me tell you something right now. Entrepreneurship got hands.

**Dr. Joy:** Got hands, serious hands. It's so funny because you shared something I think at the end of last year. I think as you were thinking about bringing your season back bringing the podcast back, you talked [00:03:30] about like one day

I'm going to talk about How this has been such a difficult year for me as an entrepreneur.

And I was like, I feel like Luvvie needs to come on therapy for black girls to talk about this entrepreneurship. And here we are almost like a cross episode to get into it because you are so right, definitely. Entrepreneurship is a journey that is not always super pleasant.

**Luvvie:** Listen, I will come on therapy for black girls. Anytime you want me, because yes, let's have this red table talk.

**Dr. Joy:** Let's come to the [00:04:00] table.

**Luvvie:** Let's come to the table. And I said, Dr. Joy is the right one too, because you're running your own company and you're a licensed therapist. And I was like, you are at the intersection of what we have to talk about, because what I don't think people really get into enough is how much entrepreneurship.

Can trigger all of your traumas

**Dr. Joy:** Listen, so I was talking to Tish, your producer before you got on and said, I am [00:04:30] surprised how much my own therapy sessions have been so much about entrepreneurship. Like I just would not have expected. There would be so much like work stuff to talk about in therapy, but you are right. Like, I really feel like all of the stuff that was laying dormant, like all of the perfect.

the people pleasing, all of the difficulty with authority, like all of that stuff really gets activated in your role as an entrepreneur. And you got to have a space to talk about it.

**Luvvie:** and you gotta have a space to talk about it. So I [00:05:00] actually want people to, for those who are not familiar with who you are, you know, let's start by, talking about you. And I mean, I'll give you, you know, your bio, all that good stuff. But like what made you want to become a therapist?

**Dr. Joy:** So I am somebody who has been very curious, although my grandmother called it nosy um, really my whole life. And so I really feel like I have grown up with just this curiosity about human behavior. Um, I spent a lot of time on the front porch with her kind of people watching and [00:05:30] like paying attention to with the grown folks.

We're talking about. And so I really feel like my interest in humans really was stoked very early. I had an opportunity to do a psychology class in high school and just fell in love with the field. It's just fascinating. Like there's just so much to learn about. How we do the things we do and why we do the things that we do.

Um, And so I actually thought I wanted to be a professor actually. Um, So I went to Xavier for undergrad and the intention was that I was going to be a psychology [00:06:00] professor and I had the opportunity to like shadow a professor and I was like, Yeah, I actually don't think that this is going to be the thing for me, but then I had another opportunity to do an internship at an actual therapist's office and really just felt like, okay, this is much more my speed.

I definitely feel like this is what I was called to do.

**Luvvie:** when did you become a therapist? What year did you get your degree?

**Dr. Joy:** Ooh, so I graduated undergrad in 2000 and then I did my master's [00:06:30] degree. in 2001. Ooh. So I graduated with my PhD in 2006. So I guess that would be the year where I was kind of still working like under somebody else's license, but I had completely finished like all of the requirements to get my degree in 2006.

**Luvvie:** Got you. So fun fact, I also took a psychology class my senior year of high school. I fell in love with psychology. So when I started college, my major was psychology, pre-med. 'cause I thought I [00:07:00] wanted to be a doctor. But when I dropped my pre-med major, I kept a psych. 'cause I loved it still. And my plan was.

To go to grad school and get my degree in industrial organizational psychology. I ain't never do it, but my bachelor's of science is in psychology with a minor in sociology. So like the love of like how human behavior dictates how we're moving. I feel you on that. So yeah, felt.[00:07:30]

**Dr. Joy:** Yes. Yes.

**Luvvie:** And like statistics for psych majors beat my ass, but it's fine.

Um, Yeah. That was the part I did not love so much.

I was math when I want to do psych. Why we got to even do math? Okay. It's the math was not math. And back then for me either.

**Dr. Joy:** Right. Right.

**Luvvie:** So you started practicing psychology. I'm not um, like therapy. You were, you're like a practicing therapist. How did therapies for black girls come to be? Because in the last four years, that [00:08:00] platform has exploded.

How did that come to be?

**Dr. Joy:** So, you know, I really feel like I was doing therapy for black girls before I ever came up with the name therapy for black girls. So my first jobs, after grad school were college counseling center positions. So that is my background is college student mental health. Um, So I've been on the campuses of several different uh, colleges across the country working as a psychologist for the students.

And so on all of those campuses, I would run groups [00:08:30] for the black women students, because we know all the stats and the history around Stigma related to mental health. And so black women were not typically coming to the counseling center at the same rate as their peers. And so in doing groups with the students kind of in the multicultural student office or the office of diversity is where I would be able to have contact with these students.

And we would have conversations about the kinds of things that black women struggle with in multiple settings, right? So with assertiveness with imposter syndrome, like the kinds of things we [00:09:00] know that often come up. And it would give me a great, it would give me great insight into. to the kinds of things that students were struggling with on campus.

And so I really feel like therapy for black girls as a platform is an extension of the work that I had already been doing in college counseling centers. Um, So I started therapy for black girls in 2014 as a blog. And it was really as a way to kind of have some conversations and to give people resources about how do you find a therapist?

Like, what do you even talk with a therapist about? Like all of [00:09:30] these conversations with, about mental health, I didn't feel like there was enough. That was targeted directly to Black women and girls.

**Luvvie:** Oh, I didn't know you started as a blog in 2014. Okay. Come on. Oh gee. Yes. Yes. Okay. Shout out. That is so cool. But when did it become a platform? Because all of a sudden I started hearing about therapy for black girls.

**Dr. Joy:** So I, [00:10:00] I think that this is an important part to highlight too. So I started in 2014, but the directory in the podcast, I did not add until 2017. So I think that's important to pay attention to, like you're saying, like in the last four or five years, I heard it pop, but we are almost about to celebrate our 10 year anniversary later this year.

And so, you know, that is, it, it is. Entrepreneurship is the long game, right? It is something that sometimes you will be doing for some time before you even see it kind of [00:10:30] take off in these ways.

**Luvvie:** So tell us, explain to us what Therapy for Black Girls, what the platform of the app is.

**Dr. Joy:** So it is really designed to make mental health more relevant and accessible for Black women and girls. That's our entire mission. We do that in a couple of different ways. Um, So people sometimes know us from the podcast. So we have a weekly podcast that comes out every Wednesday talking about all kinds of different topics.

So, um, how do you take care of yourself as an entrepreneur, imposter syndrome? One of the most recent [00:11:00] episodes we did was about **shedding the shoulds**. So all of the shoulds that we have as Black women, right? Like I should be a better mom. I should be a better boss, all of these things. Um, So we have those kinds of conversations on the podcast that really help people.

So, you know, kind of pay attention to what's going on with their mental health. We also have the therapist directory, which I think is a, how a lot of people find our work is that they are looking for a therapist and somebody says, Hey, have you heard of therapy for black girls? So we have a therapist directory that has over 6, 000 [00:11:30] therapists across the country and in Canada who love doing great clinical work with black women and girls.

So it is. An incredible opportunity for people to tap into a pool of Black women therapists, mostly Black women therapists, if they are looking for some additional support. And we also have a smaller community called the Sister Circle, which is an opportunity for people to connect one another and really support one another.

We have lots of fun events. Um, So it's really kind of like a support community in the Sister Circle.

**Luvvie:** Y'all, Therapy for Black Girls is doing the Lord's [00:12:00] work because I think one of the biggest pieces of stigma around going to therapy is people being like, well, you know, will I be safe with my therapist? And I'm like, look, I prefer my therapist to look like me. I've had a therapist for a second who did not look like me.

It was fine, but I prefer my therapist to look like me. So y'all check out therapy for black girls. Check out the podcast. It is everything. So Dr. Joy, let's talk about this whole therapy thing and how, let me tell you something right now. [00:12:30] **Anybody who was running their own company, to be quite honest, anybody who was breathing this mean therapy, but that's a different conversation. But specifically, if you are running your own company, you're not in therapy. God bless him. Cause you over here for real tussling because I'll tell you, so seven years ago April, 2017 is when I started going to therapy for the first time, even though I had my degree in psychology, I was not in therapy.**

**I'm over here thinking what's trauma. I ain't got no trauma. My childhood was okay. What [00:13:00] drove me to therapy was something professional related. I think it was the first time, I think I had like a major backlash moment and I was like, Ooh, I'm gonna go to therapy because I got to work this out thinking it was about work and then therapy.**

Like, it's like it pulled a thread and the thread never stopped pulling. And I was like, Oh, Oh, okay. So a lot of this has to do with childhood. Okay. Trauma understood. And. It literally, there's like a meme that [00:13:30] shows like all this luggage on a wheel and it's like when you first start going to therapy for one thing and then all the baggage just starts rolling in.

**Dr. Joy:** Yes,

**Luvvie:** Yes. Okay. Accurate. So. Because **the reason why for me, 2023 was really difficult outside of business tanking was how much it triggered and traumatized me on like a cellular level. How much work brings to the surface worthiness [00:14:00] issues, our self sacrificing issues, the ways in which we bring. Childhood, not enoughness into a room, into a meeting, the ways in which people's behavior around us will reflect something to us that tells us something that we got to work on. Girl, I was like, Oh my God, all my traumas was triggered. My triggers were [00:14:30] traumatized. All of it. All of it. And I was like, Oh my gosh. And being a black woman too, who is trying to run a purpose driven life in a company that comes with its own challenges, even outside of the norm.**

**Dr. Joy:** Yes.

**Luvvie:** So, yeah,

**Dr. Joy:** Yeah. I mean, where, where, where do we even start with all of it? So I, I want to start maybe with what you talked about All of the things that came up in that you talk with your therapist about that were kind of [00:15:00] driven by what was happening in your professional life. And I think about that saying, like, wherever you go, there you are.

And so I think we think that we can kind of compartmentalize these. Pieces of ourselves and that like, they will not intersect, but we are always all of us, even if we don't see it. And so, of course, there are going to be things like, , somebody quitting or, you getting rejected or getting online backlash.

Of course, that is going to activate all of this stuff for you personally, [00:15:30] even if you thought you were doing a very good job at compartmentalizing it.

**Luvvie:** Yo, wherever you go, there you are is such a bar because again, we do pride ourselves on compartmentalizing like life, personal life can be falling apart and we'll show up at the meeting and still boss it out. Meanwhile, your cortisol levels is up. up here because what you just left, you, you still brought in the room, even if you put it in a little box in little heart and thought you left it apart.

So like, you're probably more irritable. You're [00:16:00] not as steady as you were going to be for you when you started therapy for black girls, like as a actual, like, okay, I'm actually using this as a business. What did you put in place for yourself? To keep some of those triggers and traumas away, or did you even

**Dr. Joy:** I'm about to say nothing,

nothing, because I didn't even know I was starting a business. So, you know, **I think what also happens is that a lot of us find [00:16:30] ourselves as accidental entrepreneurs, right? Like, I think, I don't know what it is like to get an MBA. I feel like there are actual programs that, help you to recognize, like, okay, these are some of the things that are going to be happening.**

**So you can better prepare for it. But I think a lot of us just ended up as entrepreneurs. I definitely did. And so there was nothing in place. Like**

when I started therapy for black girls, I was still the director of the counseling center at Clark Atlanta university. So there was nothing in place. I was like working my full time job and then coming home on the [00:17:00] evenings and on the weekends doing therapy for black girls.

So, so there was nothing in place, no boundaries, no, no, nothing. Just out here with vibes.

**Luvvie:** Vibes and Inshallah and hope okay. Do you hear me? That's all we had was dreams Vibes and a vision. All right, that's all we had we didn't have I love that point about us being able to Accidental entrepreneurs. Most of us stumbled and fell upon it because we ended up doing something that felt purposeful and meaningful.

And people were like, there's a need for this. [00:17:30] So yes, let's talk about the boundaries or lack of boundaries that comes with when you are side hustling or you have a full time job and then you start entrepreneurship,

**Dr. Joy:** Yes.

**Luvvie:** what?

**Dr. Joy:** So, I mean, so I think for me, one of the first things that I needed to set some boundaries around was my time um, because, you know, when therapy for black girls kind of started taking off, like I was sometimes recording a podcast episode on my lunch hour, like taking random [00:18:00] media requests, after work, like it just became too much.

And so I think, especially when you start to hit that, peak and there's a lot of interest. It feels like you can't say no to opportunities because, oh my gosh, am I going to get this chance again? **Now, of course, almost 10 years into this, I realize, of course, there are chances always come back.**

there's very rarely any opportunity besides maybe like Beyonce calling, like you gotta. Take the call for that. Right. But most things will recycle [00:18:30] themselves, right? Like you will have multiple opportunities to do different kinds of things. And so I think something I would encourage entrepreneurs to do is to be very intentional about what they are saying yes to, because you do not have the bandwidth to do all the things all the time.

**Luvvie:** so that's actually one of the points of triggers and traumas, and I'm glad you brought that up is our idea of scarcity So even when we, it's not even just from when we get started as we're running the company, as we're doing this thing, we feel this [00:19:00] pressure to say yes to everything because we think it will never come back again.

**And it's tied to a scarcity mindset that might be from the fact that, you know, maybe we didn't have our needs met. So let's talk more about that piece.** How does somebody. Move a little bit beyond that piece where you just afraid of saying no, because you're afraid another yes might not come.

**Dr. Joy:** Yeah. So I think first you have to recognize that that's what you're doing. And I think that that is where your support system [00:19:30] comes in. Right. Because if you are just kind of doing this thing alone, which you talk about a lot, right, like having a circle and having. in your village. If you're doing this thing alone, then there's really not going to be anybody there to kind of help you to stay in balance.

And so it's important for people to be able to say, Hey, it feels like I see you everywhere. Like, what are you doing to take care of yourself? So having people who will not just be yes, men and women in your life, but also people who will say, okay, let's, let's put a pause here. Let's focus on what you're doing to actually take care of yourself.

I think that those kinds of things are really [00:20:00] important and having a therapist, right? So a therapist will really be able to. This is a new way to help you. If you're coming in every week talking about how exhausted you are and how you don't have time for all these things. A conversation with your therapist might be, well, let's actually do an audit of your time and see what's happening here and what, how are you spending your time and what do we need to say no more to?

**Luvvie:** That's one. Number two is the burnout that comes from all that. Yes. We've said, Right? [00:20:30] All the yes, all the overwhelm, all the self sacrifice. There comes a point when you hit a wall. Let's talk about burnout because actually in, in even talking to fellow entrepreneurs in this last year, year and a half, the one consistent thread, most of us are burned out like charred to a crisp.

How do you define burnout?

**Dr. Joy:** Ooh, so burnout is past like exhaustion. it is not just like, Oh, I'm really tired. It is like [00:21:00] burnout. It's like, you're running on fumes. There is no more creativity. You have completely tapped out of all of your reserve. Like you really are just showing up. So you don't get fined. Right.

So it is. So you kind of think about it, like you mentioned, there's often like irritability. There's difficulty kind of to show up for the things that even were interesting to you before. You just really are kind of going through the motions. There is nothing else. There's no thriving that exists for you anymore.

**Luvvie:** What does burnout recovery look [00:21:30] like?

**Dr. Joy:** Typically, it is about taking a step back because it can't be about just like trying to so the things we're talking about in terms of like scheduling and like therapy, like the therapy definitely would be a part of it. But burnout is like, we are so far past all of our coping mechanisms. We got to like do a complete, like a hard reset.

Like when you got to press control, alt, delete, and like reboot your computer, your computer, that is often what we have to do. And so it is taking a step back from all the things. completely withdrawing so that you can then figure out how to build a [00:22:00] sustainable life for yourself.

**Luvvie:** am absolutely in burnout recovery mode. that's where I'm at. So I was even thinking about what it takes to even reset. Right. **So for the entrepreneur, who's been going, going, going for a long time, what does the first step of burnout recovery look like?**

**Dr. Joy:** So let me, I also want to take a step back though, because I think it's interesting to me that you have had all these conversations with entrepreneurs who are currently [00:22:30] burned out. And I think that there is something about the timing of where we find ourselves now, right? So we also have to recognize that we are in the, wherever we are in this pandemic, right?

**So we are in year four, of just chaos, both medically and systemically, politically, like there has just been nothing but chaos for the past four years, at least. And so I think there is something that is important to pay attention to that. Again, you cannot [00:23:00] compartmentalize yourself from the things that are going on in the world.**

**And I think for a lot of people, we are struggling with grief that has not been named.**

**Luvvie:** Ooh.

**Dr. Joy:** many of us, many of us lost loved ones during the pandemic. Many of us lost experiences. We lost opportunities, you know, especially for people who had like brick and mortar kinds of services, like a lot of people had to shut down or figure out how to do something different.

**And so there's a lot of grief that is unprocessed that I am sure is [00:23:30] contributing to the experience of burnout that lots of people are actually feeling right now.**

**Luvvie:** Ooh. That's such a good point. You said grief unnamed. I think because of this, late stage capitalist system that we live in that basically uses us as products, the pandemic, we never even paused to be like, wait guys, that was actually a big deal. I mean, we're still in a pandemic clearly because it's still happening, but we never had a moment.

To go, okay, let's collectively just [00:24:00] sit and process the fact that millions of people died in a small amount of time. We were all inside. Our lives looked as different as it could ever look. We never stopped to do that. We just kept running. We went, Oh, we can go outside now run. And then we just went right back to the systems,

**Dr. Joy:** as we

**Luvvie:** to the processes, to the pace.

And then we're like, yeah. I am burned out. No shit. Like,

**Dr. Joy:** Exactly. And, and I think a [00:24:30] lot of us were taking on more. I, I know I definitely was because it felt like, Oh, I'm working from home. Like I can do all of these zoom calls. Like I can do all of these things. Cause I don't even have to leave. Right. And so I think our boundaries got very, very loose again.

If you did have boundaries, they got very askew in the pandemic. And so I think we were really tapping on resources that felt like we had a lot of, when we actually didn't, because we were also trying to figure out like. Like, how do I

even keep myself safe? How do I keep my family safe in the face of whatever [00:25:00] this this virus is out here.

And so I think a lot of us really are just kind of to, to your point, like we have not processed this huge experience that we have had collectively. And a lot of us took on way too much in the pandemic and we have not recovered from that.

**Luvvie:** So then the question becomes how, how do we recover global burnout, personal burnout, professional burnout, while trying to maintain these businesses [00:25:30] in these companies where there's no manual because being a CEO was never the plan.

**Dr. Joy:** So I think one is huge for us to be talking about it, right? So I think when you pose those kinds of conversations on your Instagram or when we are having these kinds of conversations in our CEO circles, it's really important to be able to just name this thing, because I think a lot of us experience stuff and we don't even realize like we're not the only ones who are feeling that way.

And so I think. Even having the [00:26:00] conversations allows people to recognize, Oh my gosh, like I do need to slow down. I am also feeling this way. And I think it is an opportunity for us to reprioritize our values. So if you realize you are feeling this way. If you don't want to continue, what kinds of things need to change in your business, in your life for you to have something very different.

And so I think it, you know, what I have done, I have called 2024 in therapy for black girls, our foundational year, because again, I feel like it took off [00:26:30] so quickly. I feel like I have been chasing the business in a lot of ways to try to like put structure in. That it never had. And so I have kind of said, okay, we're not doing a whole bunch of new stuff this year.

**Like we are going to go back to the basics to just try to get our foundation solid. And I think that that's an opportunity that other people can take too. Even if you are doing things that are hugely successful, you can always make different decisions in your business to actually build the kind of business that supports the life that you would like to have.**

**Mm**

**Luvvie:** [00:27:00] **That is a major key, the foundational piece of it all, because what ends up happening is we feel like we're on this hamster wheel we can't get off of. Right. And you're like, but, but like, how can I stop the**

**wheel? How can I stop the wheel? You have to like artificially stop the wheel. Like you, or sometimes the wheel will stop for you because your body shuts down.**

Or like, I have like three weeks where I was just like, I could not, I could barely function. And I was like, Oh, okay. Yeah. Mm hmm. That is, that is proof that I got a kind of like the wheel is being stopped for me. [00:27:30] So back to that foundational piece. So when I posted that piece about like 2023 being the hardest year of business, the responses I got, Dr.

Joy, that, that thing probably had a thousand comments. I was getting text messages from people who were like, girl, you too? Like, I thought it was just me. And it even drove home the idea of how we are operating so much in silos. Meanwhile, we're all in the same tussle. Everybody thinks they're just the only weirdo.

Meanwhile, [00:28:00] everybody's have the same struggle. But going back to that foundational piece for black women, I would say one of the things that's hardest for us as entrepreneurs is something that is very therapy oriented and very therapy necessary. Our trust issues. We got to talk about our trust issues.

And that is one of those things that if it is something that you struggle with, absolutely affect your ability to run. A business [00:28:30] because the trust issues that you have in your personal life means that it is hard for you to trust people across the board. So how do you trust team members to execute for you when you don't trust in general and you have a hard time with trust?

So let's talk about that one.

**Dr. Joy:** Listen, it is something that is you, it's a skill you have to practice just like anything else. And again, I think if you have trust issues, they are going to come [00:29:00] up in your professional life as an entrepreneur, whether you think that they are or not. Right. So, like you said, like, how can I trust people to have credit card information?

How can I trust that these people are responding to emails? And I think a lot of that is by you can only develop that skill by actually giving people an opportunity to try. Now I think for black women, we are often the most capable ones like in our families, a lot of times in our circles. And so **we are so used to operating at this like high level [00:29:30] of achievement that we think that we can just do it all our own.**

**So we don't have to get an executive assistant. We don't need a social media manager. We run ourselves thin trying to do all the things. And it does often come down to trust issues that we don't trust. That other people will do it the way that we want. And I often push back when people say this, like, Is it important that they do it the way you would do it?**

**Or is it important that it gets done well? Because those two things are not always the same thing.** And we have to be willing to let go of control. Because that's the other thing that often comes [00:30:00] up that I spend a lot of time in my own therapy talking about. It's control issues. Hehehehehehehe All of this control stuff comes up also as an entrepreneur that we have to learn to trust the team that we have hired and allow them to do the work, even if they will make mistakes.

And it's not fair to think that there won't be mistakes because we make mistakes, right? Like none of us are robots. And so even if a mistake happens, it's really about how you recover and repair.

**Luvvie:** Okay. So what are some tactical ways to show [00:30:30] trust? Right? So for the person who was like, every time I give somebody the keys, they somehow lose them or they drop the ball. What do you tell the woman who's running her company right now? Who is like, I just, people just keep, keep on messing up. I don't know.

It's not working well out well for me when I give them the reins, what, what does she need to do?

**Dr. Joy:** So one, I would encourage you to look at like, what is the training module? What is the training and onboarding system in your business? Cause that could be a part of it. And if there's [00:31:00] some issue that you keep running into with one, a member of your team, ask them, how can we address this issue? It feels like you continue to run into this issue.

What kinds of things can we put in place to support you so that you can do a better job here? The other thing is though, I don't believe in giving people too many chances to make mistakes because the other thing we don't do enough is fire quick enough, right? Because

**Luvvie:** girl, drag me.

**Dr. Joy:** Again **our own issues with [00:31:30] people pleasing our own issues with not wanting to be the bad guy Means that we often keep people**

**in roles for us far longer than they need to be. And so it may be that if you have given people an opportunity and they continue to mess up, even if you try to put supports in place, that just might not be the right person for your team at the time.**

**Luvvie:** Listen, you just dragged me because that was one of the things that happened for me in 2023. I kept people in roles way longer than I should have because I [00:32:00] gave them grace to a detriment. And I felt like I was running too fast. And I was like, it's easier to keep them on right now than fire them until it actually costs me to keep them on.

**It was costing me. But it took them almost burning my company down. Before I fired them. That's a big one. That's a big one. That's a big one.**

**Dr. Joy:** Yeah. And I, you know, I want to go back to something you said earlier, Luvvie. Cause I think that this is something that I have both been inspired by [00:32:30] and trying to figure out like, okay, how are we going to do this? Like you mentioned a lot of times as black women, we are trying to build like these purpose driven organizations, which means that we are not typically doing business, like a fortune 500 kind of company, right?

**Like we want to be softer. We want to be gentler. We want to be more compassionate, but that oftentimes means that people are able to kind of skirt around things easier. And so it does feel like, you know, again, I think this is where the collective can come together [00:33:00] and say, how do we build purpose driven organizations that still have some structure that still actually allow the business to thrive?**

**Because you can found a purpose driven organization all you want. But if you can't actually, like, meet your revenue goals and do what you need to do to take care of your team doesn't matter that you even built this organization.**

**Luvvie:** That's such a good point because I have been dedicated to building a company that I'd be proud to work for. Right? Like, I'm the boss who is [00:33:30] empathetic where I'm like, listen, I'm not saying no to you if you have a sick day for nothing. We'll figure it out. I am the boss who was like, you know what?

**Yes, we can laugh in meetings. Yes. you are person first, like person before profit. Right. and I am really proud that I moved in that way, even when people were taking advantage of it. You know, and when people weren't showing up in**

the way they would, because here's the other piece that we don't talk about often enough, I think people [00:34:00] engage with black women bosses differently than they do with other people.

They play with us in a way they don't play with other people and I don't appreciate it. So as we're trying to lead with purpose and heart. And, empathy and fairness, what we end up seeing is people will weaponize it on our behalf. And I'm like, I know you're not approaching a white male boss like you coming in here.

I know you're not like, I know it. So that is actually a real [00:34:30] struggle of mine that I'm trying to figure out how to navigate knowing that people show up different and show us respect differently than they do other people.

**Dr. Joy:** Mm hmm. And I think that this is one of those places where we will sometimes have to have difficult, awkward conversations. Right? So when you notice a team member moving in that way, are you just kind of thinking it and saying, like, I know they're not doing this with a white man? Or are you actually having the conversation?

Because I think that that is [00:35:00] difficult for us to especially I think as Black women, like, I think we tend to hire it. Yeah. A lot of other black women. And so sometimes that can feel really weird to like, have this like, okay, you're not kind of holding your weight kind of conversation, but that's actually what's needed as an entrepreneur.

And so that's another skill that I think we have to, to develop is to have sometimes difficult conversations. And I think that there's a way that you can have it compassionately. But at the end of the day, the work still has to get done. And so again, what kinds of things do we need to have in [00:35:30] place for you to be most successful in this role?

**Luvvie:** Well, so that conversation around, I know you wouldn't approach a white boss like that. Here's why it's difficult to have because it feels emotional. Right. It feels emotional. So you're like, Hmm, am I right to say this? Because it feels like an emotionally charged statement and accusation to somebody that is not necessarily quantifiable.

You just know, because you know,[00:36:00]

**Dr. Joy:** Well, that's what I'm saying. Like I wouldn't approach it as I know you wouldn't treat a white man like this. Like that's not the conversation you want to

have, even if that is your. Working hypothesis, would you want to go to the team member with is, Hey, I've noticed these many emails have gone unreplied to, or I've noticed that all of these files are missing, right?

Like you want to actually lead with the evidence and then talk about how can I best support you?

**Luvvie:** Yes. That, I mean, good point. A part of me wanting to be like, ma'am, now, you know, you [00:36:30] being trifling. Okay. You are being raggedy and janky. Please get it together. Okay. Get it together. This is not honoring who you say you are. And I think for us as black women too, because we're so hypersensitive to the, all the different things that people already project at us, but here's what I'm starting to think.

Right. Correct me if I'm wrong. I actually think we need to stop being hypersensitive to these projections. think we need to recognize that these projections are just what it is, projections, [00:37:00] but in us trying to overcompensate to not being seen as somebody who's affirming the projection, I think we kind of leave ourselves behind and it's unfair and it's kind of an unfair expectation to also take on.

So like, what does it look like for us to navigate all those ways in which people might want to, you know, stereotype us and just be like, you know what, it is what it is.

**Dr. Joy:** Mm hmm. Yeah, I I think that there is some truth to that, but I think we also have to remember, [00:37:30] like, we have to be in touch with reality, right? And so if you are a Black woman running a business and a team of mostly other Black women, like, you do have to be sensitive, I think, to the context in which we all exist, but I think that there can be conversations and conversations.

As a team, like what kind of culture are you building around? How do we all honor each other in the best possible ways as a part of this company? Right. And then get people on board with figuring out, okay, these are our guidelines about how we talk to one another. These are our [00:38:00] guidelines about how we ask for help.

I think that there are things that we can do that still honor, like, okay, we know we're all black women here without like feeding into the stereotypes.

**Luvvie:** Facts. So then another issue that I think comes up for a lot of black women who are in power positions and just a lot of black women in general is our hangups around asking for help. I call it the ask wound. And I think we all have the ask wound, which is [00:38:30] ultimately there's been a time where you finally decide to ask for help and either somebody didn't do the thing you asked or they threw it back in your face or they made you feel bad for asking for help.

And you remember that one time. And now you do not ask for help and you think I just need to do it myself. How do we fix this ask wound? Because in business it's killing us.

**Dr. Joy:** Yeah. So let me, **honestly, you have helped me a lot with this. One of your favorite things to share [00:39:00] is let my helpers find me. And I feel like that is something I really hold on to because as black women, there have been a lot of instances where we have asked for things and people didn't show up to help for us, and we're always showing up for other people. And so it can be really, really hard. And it's very vulnerable to ask for people to do something for you. But I think when you give people the opportunity to show up for you, what you will find is that you don't have to always have the story of people not actually showing up.**

**Sometimes people [00:39:30] do actually show up in very, very big ways. And so what I tell people is that you deserve the opportunity to have a different narrative. You deserve the opportunity to have this story rewritten for yourself. So if all the time you were asking and nobody said, no, that doesn't mean you stop asking.**

**That means maybe you find different people to ask.** And so asking a different set of people, finding other people to hire for your team, people who just run with the ball without you even having to ask, I think really allows you to [00:40:00] see like, okay, this was something that was a part of my history, but I now see that there are other people that will actually show up for me.

**Luvvie:** Yes. And that is a healing thing. I will tell you, Dr. Joy, being a published author has helped to heal a lot of my ask wound. And here's why. So when my first book was coming out And I knew that my first book was not considered a big book and I knew that like, I barely got the book deal because 11 publishers said [00:40:30] no.

I was like, yo, I gotta make this book because if I can make it a success, it will make somebody else's life easier. And at that point I was team, I don't ask

nobody for help. But I knew that for this book to be successful, I needed to ask everybody. I knew everybody I knew for help. Hey, do you know this person?

Can you call them for me? Hey, can you buy a book? Hey, can you introduce me to this person? Hey, can you buy three books? I knew. So I [00:41:00] literally had to be like, Oh, I know this is killing me to ask. I know it is kill. Ooh, it is killing me to ask, but I'm gonna have to ask. And I forced myself and I pushed myself past all my discomfort of like asking.

It was killing me every day. But when I tell you most people, I asked for something said, yes, I would ask and I would like be all nervous. Like, Oh, fine. Let me ask him. And they'll be like, Oh my God. Yes. Like they will say easy yeses to me. And when my book came out and hit the [00:41:30] times list. It was because of all the yeses I got.

It was because of all the people who were like, we were just waiting. What do you need from us? And how they showed up to me and showed up for me and showed up with me healed something in me that I couldn't even quantify because it really, it was like a all the people who had said no to me ever before did not even amount to.

A percent of the people who said yes, and it really taught me that the [00:42:00] stories that we tell ourselves about people are often not true. The stories that we have taken on the narratives that we have said are facts are not true and people are just waiting. So, Every time I have to launch a book, I have to ask for bigger things.

And each time it makes me uncomfortable, but each time people say yes. **I think it's such a humbling and generous thing to do.** And so **if you're listening to this and you're somebody who like, I have trouble asking, I'm telling you, give people [00:42:30] a chance to show you different. Give people a chance to heal that part of you that is convinced.**

**That you don't deserve help and there's no help for you. And to your point, my favorite prayer that I say whenever I'm walking into a room or if it's a new season in my life, or even about to just like go outside is, Let my helpers find me. I ask God to simply make it easy where I don't even have to ask that They will [00:43:00] find me like if there's anybody whose purpose is tied to mine They will come and find me in wherever I am.**

So yes, I just want to offer that to y'all and Yeah,

**Dr. Joy:** How beautiful. And what would have happened if you hadn't gotten out of your own way? Right? Like how many doors would have been closed for you and for so many people that you have opened doors for if you had not gotten out of your own way and made the ask. And so I just want to echo that, that I [00:43:30] think it is important for us to make small ask, right?

Like if it feels uncomfortable, you can start small. You don't have to start with like, Hey, will you write a blurb for my book or whatever? But can you make a small ask? That then just builds upon itself because then the momentum starts and you get a little bit more comfortable with it.

**Luvvie:** And here's the thing is the relationships also matter, right? Who you're asking to your point. If you've asked some people and they said, no, maybe you just seem to ask the wrong people or people who you haven't deposited enough into withdraw [00:44:00] from. Okay. Like, so if you're getting those, maybe you haven't deposited, like I'll get random people DMing me.

Random things for me to do for them. And I've never heard about them before. I never heard from them before. No, like it's going to be a no from me, but if they went and asked somebody else who they've already been in relationship with. That's a powerful thing that can get them the yes. So the other thing that I think we should talk about is because black women are excellent in [00:44:30] so many ways, I think we have artificially high standards.

So in business. When we bring that in there, I know, I do, I know, I know my standards are high. I know it. I'm working on it. How do we adjust for everybody else's baseline? When I have to tell you we are excellent in so many ways, how can we adjust?

**Dr. Joy:** Yeah. I think that that again requires us to be realistic with our expectations and knowing that about ourselves, [00:45:00] right? So that you can give people grace. Now I think that there is like, okay, this is my standard and this is what's acceptable. And I think for black girls, we're like acceptable. Like that's not, it's not even a part of our lingo, right?

But sometimes like enough is enough. And so I think you have to also think about what is the standard of excellence. Always doing to you, your business and the culture that you are trying to set up as a part of your business. And if it is running, everybody ragged, [00:45:30] people are angry. They don't want to show up on the zoom.

They don't want to show up in the office. Is it actually worth it? Right? Or is it better to build something that is great and excellent sometimes? Right? Again, because I think we have to give our businesses grace also, right? Like we are not fortune 500 companies. And so if we are trying to compare ourselves to them, then we are already going to be losing because we actually cannot compete with that kind of a structure.

**Luvvie:** That's real. But I also think it starts with giving ourselves [00:46:00] grace. First, our inability to give ourselves grace reflects. In ways we can't give others grace. So what does self compassion look like? How do we practice it more?

**Dr. Joy:** Yeah. So the easiest way, I mean, easy, as in I can share is talking to yourself the same way you would talk to a best friend. So typically when our best friend makes a mistake, we don't say you're so stupid. You never do anything right. Like I can't stand you. But sometimes if we look in the mirror, our self talk is super, super [00:46:30] critical.

And a lot of that goes back to our childhoods as well. if you really examine it, the messages and the little voice in our head is often somebody in our early life who was super critical of us. And so really taking time to like stop yourself when you find yourself being super critical of yourself and saying, Hey, I'm human too.

Sometimes we make mistakes, right? So if you can kind of get into the practice of talking to yourself, kinder, more gentler then that typically can go a long way and being more compassionate with yourself.

**Luvvie:** A tip [00:47:00] that a guest of this podcast game, Debbie Brown, she said, she started putting a picture of her. At a young age around her. So then she would look at that picture in the moments where she felt hypercritical and go, wait a minute, that's who I'm looking at. How will I talk to them? How will I give them grace?

I was saying that when my first children's book came out last year, Little Troublemaker Makes a Mess. I realized that it was me, like reparenting [00:47:30] myself and giving myself the words and the grace that I probably didn't get. And it's teaching adult me in real time, that same type of kindness to myself. So I'm kind of like, you know what, maybe all of us just need to write letters.

You ain't got to write a book, maybe write a letter to enter you like seven year old you. And then just read those letters in the moments where you mad at yourself.

**Dr. Joy:** Mm hmm. And isn't that beautiful that we always have a chance to kind of get a [00:48:00] do over, right? Because I think that that's the other part that is often difficult for people is that you feel like these things happen to me. And so where do I go? But there is a process where you can be kinder and gentler to little you that is now evolved into grownup you, right?

And so we always have a chance to do things differently. We always have a chance for people to show up for us in ways that typically they have not. And I think it's thing open to the fact that these things can happen. That is really a measure of success.

**Luvvie:** And the little you that you need [00:48:30] to talk to is the one that was running that meeting who popped off. I was talking to my therapist one day and she was like, you do know, 11 year old you is the one who ran that meeting. I was like, what you mean? I was like, what you mean? She was like, yeah, she was running the show.

It wasn't grown up you. And I was like. Well, damn. Okay. Okay. Drag me. All right. She was like, you got to move little you out the way. And I was like, dang, that's a word. But even [00:49:00] thinking about how my year unfolded, I was like, man, they came a point where they had triggered me to little me

**Dr. Joy:** Yeah.

**Luvvie:** where I feel like little me was like, Y'all took my candy.

**Dr. Joy:** And then you just in survival mode, right? Like you are operating just kind of like trying to get through the days as opposed to like, okay, how am I rational? How am I composed? Like when you get to that stage, you are just really kind of trying to survive and fight for your Fight for your life. You are in the tussle, Lord. You are in the tussle. [00:49:30] And I'm just like, yo, it's just a whole bunch of little versions of us running these companies. These multimillion dollar companies, these, whatever these awards that we're getting ultimately comes down to how we feel supported how we feel seen, heard, and all of that stuff.

**Luvvie:** And I think for all of us who struggled last year, imagine little you being scared that you about to be broke and not have a house again. Right. So to

your point of going back to the foundation for your own company, [00:50:00] being like, er, everybody pause everything.

This is what we're going to do for me. We're also there. Like my company, our priorities right now are two things, foundational systems. So making sure that our systems are efficient, that our files are organized, and then to our book academy, teaching other people how to be successfully published authors.

And we said, anything that's not in that realm, deprioritize, Leave it because oftentimes we're doing 17 things at once we're doing eight and we're [00:50:30] wondering why we can't focus on one Well, we're also going back down to the basics, like get focused, get clear.

**Dr. Joy:** Yeah, that's another struggle I think entrepreneurs have is because we do are typically so creative that there's all these things that like are very interesting, but you can write those down and like come back to them later. Like you don't have to do all the things at once.

**Luvvie:** Every idea is not for right now. Some of them is for one year, five years, 10 years. So then I would say [00:51:00] one of the other critical pieces, how do we stop being so addicted to being busy? How?

**Dr. Joy:** So I think it is, it is important to examine where the busyness is coming from, because for a lot of us, we want to stay busy because we are afraid of what will come up if we're quiet and still.

**Luvvie:** Hold on. Wait a minute. Oh, go ahead and say that again and drag us one more time. Please say that again.[00:51:30]

**Dr. Joy:** I think we have to examine what the busyness is actually masking, where a lot of us, we are so busy because we are afraid of what will come up if we are actually quiet and still. Yeah, that's why we don't want to spend time in the morning journaling. We don't want to have any blocks in our schedules like we are actually masking other kinds of things like anxiety, depression, all kinds of things. And it looks [00:52:00] okay because busyness is like a socially acceptable form of coping, right?

So if you look busy, nobody's going to say like, Oh, she should sit down. Typically people are going to, you get more accolades, right? Like, so it's a very successful way to mask these underlying issues that we don't want to deal with. But again, How sustainable is it? Like at some point you are going to burn out and so it is better to try to get ahead of it and actually build a life in a business

that is sustainable before, you know, you get sat down [00:52:30] for some reason that you don't want.

**Luvvie:** If that ain't a word, if that ain't a word, a sermon, a preach, the ways we have become addicted to the busy, like, and it is a drug of its own.

Right. And the ways we've been rewarded for the busy, except it's killing us softly. And the ways we don't know how to stop being busy because we're so used to it.

It's all we've known for such a long time. That's also why, you know, Tricia [00:53:00] Hersey's, Nap Ministry, such a revolution, rest is resistance. How do we actually then slow down? Like let's get real practical for the person who is the mom, the wife, the CEO, the sister PTA president, who now finds herself overwhelmed.

Yes. Burned out from the worldwide foolishness, but really from also her own plate of stuff, what way. To come away from [00:53:30] that, to get above water from the drowning

**Dr. Joy:** yeah. So I think looking at what you can say no to most immediately, right? So is there something that is clearly pushing you over the edge that you can put off on somebody else's plate? I think also having very hard boundaries with your schedule. So after five o'clock, you are not taking calls. You're not checking email.

One of the other ways that I think that is easy for people to kind of disengage with this busyness is to take email off their phones or to have a different phone that is [00:54:00] just for work. And then your phone, you know, your, your personal phone is for other things. Because I think that that is kind of the gateway for a lot of us, like, because we have these little devices that are always with us, work never really stops.

And so if you are struggling in this way, I think taking email off your phone or having it as a separate device is really important. And then working with the therapist to really do some of this auditing of your schedule. And to look at where, what is the busyness masking for you? So is it people pleasing?

Is it anxiety? Like what is actually [00:54:30] going on for you that you feel like if you are still something's going to happen, I think really you need to dig into the deeper issues because if you do all the practical things without actually

figuring out how you got there in six months, you're just going to find yourself there again.

So you got to get to the underlying issue.

**Luvvie:** right back there. And one thing I would also recommend again, working my way out of burning myself and like Ben's been saying a lot of nose is turning off notifications on your phone to all the apps. So for [00:55:00] example, I don't get Facebook, Instagram, threads, LinkedIn notifications popping up in my phone.

I only see them when I go inside the app, even that thing, the amount of brain ping, ping, ping, ping, ping, ping, ping, ping, ping, it is unsettling. It is nervous system dysregulating. Turn those notifications off. You can know who liked your posts on Instagram. When you go into Instagram, don't have a pop up on your phone, into your tray.

Like it is, that is [00:55:30] so disruptive. And I'm like, start there. Honestly, if you listen to this, just start there and then work on the other stuff. Start there

**Dr. Joy:** a great place to start. And it's important for people to know that those platforms are designed like that purposely, like there are people who are on like Instagram and Meta's payroll that are the same people who designed casinos, right? Like their goal is to keep us on the platforms as much as possible and get those little dopamine rushes so that you keep coming back.

And so turning off those notifications is a great way to kind of break [00:56:00] yourself of that.

**Luvvie:** and sometimes I just disappear off social media. I don't even, I'm not one of those who's like, I'm going to be gone for the next two weeks. I literally just be disappearing and people don't hear from me for two weeks. And I pop back up like, how y'all doing? I'm like, I'm like, how y'all doing today? Yes. I need to take my break.

And. So I, when I say burnout recovery, I am actively looking at my habits. I'm looking at all the different ways in which I've set up my day that are not setting me up for success. So I am slower to respond to people. [00:56:30] I am like missing some things. I'm like, well, you know what? It's going to have to wait and really trying to think about.

How can the company that I'm running support the life that I want to design and live as opposed to me being a handcuffs to the company and having it be a part of my stressors. So that's the space I'm in, especially after last year. And I think since so many of us also experienced a [00:57:00] rough year, we should all probably be in the same type of audit mode.

We should all be currently auditing. Auditing how we're moving every single day that is keeping us attached to this like high cortisol life that we live in.

**Dr. Joy:** And what a beautiful gift that is for you to offer your audience, right? Because I think we don't we sometimes take for granted what us modeling that does for other people, right? So somebody like love you can say I'm taking a step back. Y'all not gonna see me on [00:57:30] social. It does serve as a possibility model for other people to say, I hadn't thought I could do that, or maybe I should reconsider.

And so I think it's just so important to have these conversations and to model this for other people.

**Luvvie:** Listen, I took the whole month of January off social. Nobody heard from me. There was no announcements. There was no, I just, they just didn't hear from me online. And I'm like, look, we all in our own little corners. I'm considering this healing season because I think it's all tied. Like, and I think having a year like 2023 [00:58:00] that was tough for so many of us is an instruction and a warning.

It's a warning like for me to go through that year and just be like, well, everything should be just like it was would be goofy. So I actually think it is a warning for all of us to kind of recalibrate and reset our systems, our goals, our visions for ourselves and figure out what is important. And how can you do it in a way that does not, disrupt your peace?

Cause it [00:58:30] can, if you're not careful.

**Dr. Joy:** Mm hmm. Absolutely.

**Luvvie:** So if there is something that you can offer us that you are doing different in 2024, what is that Dr. Joy?

**Dr. Joy:** Ooh, I won't say that it's different for 2024, but it is something that is the thing that has been most successful for me in terms of protecting my own boundaries and that is not being the one responding to emails. So I think having

like a layer of people, so whatever that looks like for you, an executive assistant, your cousin, like [00:59:00] having somebody who is like corresponding with people on your behalf has been the change maker in my business because it just, there's so much like there's an unending flow of people needing something and so I think having somebody else be the buffer between that and you has made a difference for me.

**Luvvie:** I'm so glad you said that. I saw a thread on thread of people being like, I'm a solopreneur, I don't need an executive assistant. I'm sitting here like, so when you're sleeping or when you're on [00:59:30] vacation or when you just don't got it, all business stops because what now? That's not a flex. It's not a flex.

Here's the thing. Being a village of one is not a flex families of one don't exist. Empires of one don't exist. Teams of one do not exist. You are not a CEO if you don't have anybody to manage. And I believe that, but ultimately it just means that we are passing on some of our responsibilities, so we don't.

[01:00:00] Sit under all that weight all the time. So I'm so glad you said that. Like, at the minimum, if you are listening to this and you have your own business, if you don't take nothing away from this conversation, find a virtual assistant. I don't care if you're only paying them for five hours a week. Find somebody that you can hand something over to so you don't have to do it.

Please.

**Dr. Joy:** a great way of you starting that asking practice, right? Like [01:00:30] you are starting small by asking your virtual assistant to do these things.

**Luvvie:** I will have links in the show notes of places where y'all can go to find virtual assistants that are literally project basis, like literally week by week, you only got to commit no long term, nothing. If you don't want to use them next week, you ain't got to use them next week. Just check the show notes and we will include some links.

But I need us all to do that because my goal for all of us as we're running these purpose driven businesses is that [01:01:00] we can do it while maintaining our peace and sanity.

**Dr. Joy:** Yes, absolutely.

**Luvvie:** Dr. Joy, you are amazing. Thank you for joining me.

**Dr. Joy:** Anytime.

**Luvvie:** This was definitely a confessional, a therapy session, campfire, and we needed it.

**Dr. Joy:** Indeed. Thank you for having me.

[01:01:30] [01:02:00]