

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

[00:00:00] **Fawn Weaver:** My obituary could be a blank sheet of paper as far as I'm concerned. I know a lot of people like to write their obituary. Ooh Give me a blank sheet and sprinkle my ashes over some river somewhere and let them flow.

[00:00:12] I don't care. What I care about is, "Well done, my good and faithful servant." That's it.

[00:00:18] **Luvvie:** Come on! Come on!

[00:00:22] [00:00:30] [00:01:00] [00:01:30]

[00:01:34] **Luvvie:** Okay. Okay. We back with another episode of Professional Troublemaker and I gotta tell y'all, and y'all know, I don't say this all the time. after I finished this interview, I was like, that might be the best podcast episode I've ever recorded. And I meant it. Like this episode y'all It's special because. Some of the things that this guest said, [00:02:00] I've never heard them be said. So here's the thing as entrepreneurs, managing our businesses, our passions, our lives is crucial for our success, right? And one of the people who I admire is Fawn Weaver and she's CEO and founder of Uncle Nearest Premium Whiskey, a brand that honors the legacy of the first Black Master Distiller, Nearest Green.

[00:02:25] Now beyond that, Fawn has become a mentor, a [00:02:30] sister and a friend to me. And the way that she moves is so different. Like it's, it's different from anybody else that I've ever met. Here's the thing, Fawn is also a New York Times bestselling author. And her latest book, Love and Whiskey, the remarkable true story of Jack Daniel, his master distiller Nearest Green, and the improbable rise of Uncle Nearest, came out June 18th.

[00:02:53] And that book is a game changer. So, There's many reasons why I invited Fawn on. [00:03:00] One, again, she different y'all. She moves different. I've never met anybody with such steely peace , like peace. And as she's running a billion dollar company, how do you do that? Okay? She talks about that.

[00:03:12] Fawn has this deep sense of purpose that is deeper than I've ever actually seen anybody have. So that I was like, come on, no one. But even beyond that, just her approach to life, faith, is unlike anything I've ever seen.

[00:03:30] So this episode, yes, it's about business. Yeah. A little bit on the surface, but man, it's about soul.

[00:03:37] Like this episode is a soul filled, God led piece. So I'm excited for y'all to listen to it because it shifted something in me in a real way. So yeah, let's um, jump on in.

[00:03:51] **Luvvie:** All right, so I felt like you were the right person to have a conversation with because you basically hit unicorn status. But even beyond that, you're able to maintain your peace through it all, which

[00:04:01] **Fawn Weaver:** That's because I don't pay attention to the unicorn status. Zero attention. That's the world paying attention to that. Like, y'all, I got work to do. I pay

[00:04:11] **Luvvie:** You got work to do. Okay, so you are all going to get this episode and by the time you're hearing this. [00:04:20] Fawn's third book will have dropped into the world, Love and Whiskey. So it's actually a really good starting point because people hear about Uncle Nearest, which if y'all don't know, it's a whiskey brand, right?

[00:04:33] Cause, cause I'm the person who doesn't know the difference between whiskey and bourbon and whiskey. Is bourbon whiskey?

[00:04:38] **Fawn Weaver:** all bourbon is whiskey, but not all whiskey is bourbon.

[00:04:41] **Luvvie:** Bet. Boom. Cause I don't be know nothing about that.

[00:04:44] **Fawn Weaver:** You don't need to. We need, we need teetotalers in this world to balance it all out. We good. [00:04:50] Yeah.

[00:04:51] **Luvvie:** tell me. you've lived eight lifetimes. Actually, you've lived eight lifetimes. You really have

[00:04:57] **Fawn Weaver:** Yes.

[00:04:58] **Luvvie:** now uncle nearest is the one that you are known for, but tell me how you even got to the point to start uncle nearest, not your whole history, but give me the piece where one day you said, you know what?

[00:05:13] I want to start a bourbon company. How did that happen?

[00:05:18] **Fawn Weaver:** Yeah. I think it was a [00:05:20] little bit more just natural alignment than, than that. I wouldn't be able to pinpoint for you the day because I don't, I don't have these epiphanies like a lot of people do. Right. Where it's like, this is the day that I remember, you know, I thought this, or I really don't. My, my life is a series of walking through open doors.

[00:05:40] And just praying that the Lord would only open the doors that are for me and that he would close the doors that are not for me, but he closed

[00:05:50] them in such a way that even I couldn't open them. So, a lot of times we're like, you know, praying these different prayers and it's like, Lord, close that door, but then we'll go and open it.

[00:05:59] And he's like, look. I closed it. You reopened it. So my life is like shut it in such a way that that no man can open it, including myself. So for me, I really enter situations with reckless abandon. Like I am not concerned about when people go, well, you know, why'd you go down this path instead of that path?

[00:06:18] Well that was the path, that was lit [00:06:20] for me. And so my life is literally a series of just going down lit paths and open doors and whatever's on the other side of that, uh, Then I look at that and just keep going. So I couldn't tell you when it happened. All I know is that it felt very natural for it to happen.

[00:06:38] **Luvvie:** A lot of people see you now and they probably assume a lot of things about you. But one of the things that I love about you is that you talk about how you were a high school [00:06:50] dropout.

[00:06:51] **Fawn Weaver:** that's one of my favorite parts of my story.

[00:06:53] **Luvvie:** y'all see Fawn Weaver on the cover of Forbes magazine and this woman dropped out of high school.

[00:07:01] Tell us about that.

[00:07:03] **Fawn Weaver:** The, the end of the 10th grade was the last grade that I finished before I decided to go back to college forever later. But that was the last, that was the last grade I finished. And, I remember when I was in the ninth grade, I think it was the ninth grade. I'm pretty sure it was. My teacher

[00:07:20] calls, my English teacher called my parents in and told them that she was kicking me out of English class.

[00:07:27] Now, I wasn't like, um, I wasn't a student that caused a bunch of ruckus or was disruptive or anything like that . And so it was a little odd. And so she, she literally called my parents. And said, I'm kicking your daughter out of my class because I never know what kind of day I'm going to have until your daughter walks through the door. [00:07:50] And she said, and I will never forget it. She's sitting behind her desk and she said, there is one teacher in this classroom and she sits behind this desk. So, for that reason, I have to kick your daughter out. Here's the interesting thing, though, is that I wasn't a popular kid at all. Like I didn't have a crew, a clique, none of that kind of stuff, but what I did do is I challenged.

[00:08:13] And so I didn't let any teacher just say this and this and this, the whole authoritarian thing never worked for [00:08:20] me. So I left home when I was 15 for the same reason. I needed actual explanations. I still require that to this day. I am big on gathering data. You won't really hear me give an opinion until I've gathered data from all sides.

[00:08:34] And then I will actually, you know, if, if something needs to be said, I'll say it at that time, but I'm constantly challenging because I'm constantly gathering data. Well, in our society, especially with African Americans, The parenting style has been authoritarian. [00:08:50] We got that passed us from slavery. It's been authoritarian.

[00:08:53] And then the teaching style, the teachers, that has been authoritarian. So then you have me come into the mix and I'm like, yeah, I'm going to need you to explain that. And by the way, I'm going to actually need you to have data to back up your explanation. And that challenge just bothered a lot of people, but it has served me very well in life.

[00:09:12] It got you kicked out of English class, Fawn

[00:09:16] **Luvvie:** think I did alright

[00:09:18] You know, relatively [00:09:20] okay. So then you left home at 15 because also your parents, like you were like, basically like, I don't want people to be telling me what to do.

[00:09:26] **Fawn Weaver:** it's not, I've never had an issue with people telling me what to do. I have an issue with you are giving rules. And your rules don't make sense to me and you yourself can't explain them.

[00:09:38] **Luvvie:** Ooh.

[00:09:39] Keith

[00:09:40] **Fawn Weaver:** my husband always jokes. He always says, you love rules. Like you live your life by a pretty strict set of rules.

[00:09:47] However, your rules make sense [00:09:50] to you. So you ignore every rule that does not actually make sense to you. So I love rules. People say I'm a rule breaker. I really am not. I just don't pay attention to rules that don't make sense to me. So you

[00:10:03] set up this particular rule for this particular reason. I'm like, yeah, no, that, that doesn't, that don't actually work for me.

[00:10:11] **Luvvie:** that has served you well. So what happened between 15? Like, what did, what did you do after 15?

[00:10:16] **Fawn Weaver:** so when I left home, I moved to Watts. I moved to Jordan Downs [00:10:20] So home of the grape street crips in the middle of the bloodiest gang war and the, the crips and the bloods were obviously opposed. And, and so it's so interesting. I look back on it. I'm like, girl, you were, you were so covered by God.

[00:10:33] It's not even funny. Because the guy I was dating lived in Nickerson Gardens, which was the projects across the way, but it was all bloods. And then I'm on the crip side. And so on any given day, you would have processions with these purple, with purple rags, because grape street crips [00:10:50] were purple. It was almost every day.

[00:10:52] That there's a procession with this on one side. But then if I go over to Nickerson gardens, I'm going to have the same procession and I would walk between those two in the middle of a gang war. Like I was bulletproof to this day. I'm like, Lord, you have so covered me. From the very beginning, like even before knowing I was marked, even before knowing I was chosen, I lived in such a bubble because [00:11:20] I moved through environments in which I shouldn't have lived through and I was never touched. So in that. So I lived there and the interesting thing is, is that I felt perfectly comfortable living in the

projects because there's really no rules. Your parents aren't, the parents aren't even around to tell the young people what to do. Like once you get to a certain age in the hood, you grown. So I loved that I had nobody telling me what to do.

[00:11:49] I had nobody telling [00:11:50] me you got to go to school. You got to do this. You got to do that. I didn't mind food stamps at all. I had a thing with honey buns. I would spend all my food stamps on Honey Buns. I'd get the Honey Buns, come back, put them in the microwave. To this day, give me a Honey Bun in the microwave for 20 seconds, I'm set.

[00:12:05] Like, they're Keith goes He's telling me on a regular, he's like, Baby, you still got some hood tendencies. Like, to this day, give me an old school Honey Bun, not these new ones. But that was like, I really enjoyed that environment. The [00:12:20] challenge was one day I went to a concert, like a hip hop concert that was there, that was there in Watts and it was, you know, packed, surrounded by people and, and I've never been one to be in a crew or a clique So I didn't even know that I was there with anybody. I think I was actually by myself. I don't remember being there with anybody, but I'm enjoying the music, rocking out. And then the guy on stage, he looks dead at me and he tells the DJ, cut the music, cut the music. And so he looks at me and he goes, y'all, [00:12:50] he didn't say y'all, whatever the word was back then.

[00:12:52] But you know, I've been in the South a long time. So it's now it's y'all. But he says, we got a half breed in the house. Now, mind you, I'm lighter skin now because I've learned that we do need sunscreen. But at that time I'd hang out in the sun all the time, no sunscreen. So I was pretty brown skin at that time.

[00:13:14] And so. for me I never, I mean, I was as brown skin as everybody [00:13:20] that was around me. The only difference was I have hazel eyes. I have light eyes. And if I have, if I'm wearing green, they're green. Right. And so he looks dead at me and says, we got a half breed in the house. And I remember in that moment thinking, You're no longer safe here.

[00:13:35] So it was my first experience with colorism and, and the crazy part about colorism is, I mean, literally I was the same complexion as the people next to me. So the only distinguishment that was any different was the color of my eyes. So we look at [00:13:50] colorism when we think skin tone, it's like, no, no, there's other elements that people consider with that.

[00:13:56] And so after that, I left. And I went to someone's house apartment that I met there and girl, she had an abusive boyfriend who was chasing her

around with a butcher knife that did not last very long. So I left from there and went to a homeless shelter, called my friend's place. And it's one of those places you can't stay for longer than two weeks before they place you somewhere.

[00:14:19] [00:14:20] And they placed me at a place called children of the night. Which is, I'm so grateful that I was there to, to experience it, but it wasn't a place that was actually made for me because it was really a place for, for kids who were human trafficked. Or were either in drugs. There's some type of sexual element related to a prostitution, human trafficking, that type of thing.

[00:14:41] That's why it's called children of the night, amazing organization. So I'm there I'm as a kid, I start counseling other kids. that are [00:14:50] there I just had a heart for the, those who were there who were going through that situation because I had never experienced any type of sexual abuse or trauma to this day.

[00:15:00] I never have. And so I was there for until I was 18, but on my 18th birthday, you can't be at children of the Night after you're 18. So then I moved to a place, a homeless shelter called covenant House in Hollywood it was another really amazing organization. And so that's how I spent my 18th birthday. And [00:15:20] I'll tell you what I'd have it.

[00:15:21] No way. No other way from age 15 to age 18. I would not change a single thing.

[00:15:25] **Luvvie:** Wow. Fawn So you literally were just like this nomad who was trying to, and throughout all of this, what are your parents saying and doing and are they reaching out? Like,

[00:15:36] **Fawn Weaver:** There's no cell phones. Cause remember I'm, I'm knocking on 50. There's no cell phones. There's no email. I'm just like the only way anybody could get in contact with me is they'd have to track me down through a [00:15:50] landline. So I wasn't, I didn't hear from my parents at all. Now they were in ministry. So the challenge with people in ministry, especially in the black churches, Is that you really in that type of situation you really have to just kind of go, you know We're just praying for her and you just move on so I don't even know how they felt about that situation or if they just Kind of put it out of their mind to focus on the other kids that were still there.

[00:16:16] And you just sort of discount me as the [00:16:20] black sheep. I've never had that conversation. Cause It's not a point of trauma for me in any way, shape or form. So I've never felt the need to go back and. Send anybody else

through trauma over it Because because it's just never Bob. It's something that's never bothered me.

[00:16:33] **Luvvie:** And then how were you managing throughout that time? Cause you also talk about when you hit the lowest point of your life. And I would definitely want you to talk about that, moment you realized about

[00:16:42] like you were here for a real reason.

[00:16:43] **Fawn Weaver:** yeah, so when I was I started my first company when I was 18 years old and It [00:16:50] was PR special events It was something that I was innately gifted in It was figuring out how to tell a story and tell a story around a product in such a way that the press actually wanted to cover it.

[00:17:04] So most PR firms at that time, they just did press releases. And I looked at that strategy and thought that strategy doesn't really make sense to me. Why don't we just take the products to where the press will already be? And so it's what we now know as product placement, product [00:17:20] integration, but it's something that just came natural to me.

[00:17:21] So I was working as an intern for the top black publicist in the country, actually. and I had this, this strategy for two of her clients that she was about to lose because the press releases weren't working. And so long story short, we, we moved forward with my strategy, even though she didn't understand it.

[00:17:40] She's like, look, the clients like your pitch, go for it. Now, mind you, I'm 18. I don't look that different now than I did when I was 18. So it's, it's funny because we mature [00:17:50] very quickly as black women, but then it's like we stopped aging for decades, right? so my maturity level was incredibly high at that time.

[00:17:59] And so those two clients actually said to me separately, we're leaving this firm either way. If you start your own company, let us know. And we'll go with you. So I ended up having these two clients. Well, fast forward. I'm a young gal, you know, I'm, I'm really smart in regard to press and that came natural to me, but I still don't know how to run a [00:18:20] business.

[00:18:20] So I'm hiring people that I cannot afford and I'm now managing people when I, myself, didn't even yet know how to quite manage myself. And so if you imagine from the time that I'm very young until let's call it 19, it's just



nonstop challenges, nonstop challenges. And it's like, I get to 19. And I'm like, look, I don't want to do this another 19 years.

[00:18:45] Like it's all, it's cool. Earth is cool and all, but I kind of, I'm good. I've [00:18:50] seen, I'm ready to go. And I tried to take my life twice.

[00:18:54] And so in that moment, now I think I'm maybe 20. I remember laying in that hospital bed and you've got all these doctors around. And I'm like, look, there's two things I discovered in that moment.

[00:19:05] In that bed. The first one was I am clearly here for a reason. So I need to just figure out what that reason is. And lean into it It's what we now call purpose, right? But at the time I don't know that I would have [00:19:20] called it purpose. It was just, I'm here for a reason. I need to lean into that. The second thing that I, that I determined laying in that bed was I've now tried to take me out twice and I'm a real strong minded, headed, everything.

[00:19:33] Strong-willed and I myself could not take myself out. So in that moment I was like, if I can't take me out, nobody can take me out. And I spent every day from that moment, I'd probably say for about six months [00:19:50] I did nothing but work and read. I cut out everything. There was no social media, so that was easy.

[00:19:56] But I cut out radio. I cut out TV. I cut out going to the movies. I cut out going out to dinner. I cut out every single thing. The only thing I left in. were reading time to read. And I read pretty much well I read the Bible frontwards and backwards. And then, you know, over and over again, but then all these different books and they were all, when I look back at them, the very, the majority of [00:20:20] them were Christian help type of books, but there was one book that I would say was the most impactful and it was a book called, please understand me.

[00:20:28] II the Roman numeral two. And it was basically the Myers Briggs test and an explanation of your personality. And for the first time, because no one ever understood me, nobody ever understood anything about me for the first time I take this test and I'm reading it and I'm learning that my personality style is so [00:20:50] rare.

[00:20:50] The likelihood that I've never bumped into anybody with my personality Was very high. So people, for me, I'm trying to get people to understand who I am. And in that moment, I decided I don't have to, because no

one will understand anyway. So even to this day, I don't feel the need to explain how I think, how I move, how I live.

[00:21:11] And I don't have, I don't feel the need to get anybody, to agree with me. I kind of sit on this island, if you will, and say, look, this is, this is who I [00:21:20] am. This is what I believe, but I don't, I don't feel the need to cause I don't feel the need to cause you to believe in what I am saying or what I'm doing.

[00:21:28] I'm just moving in the way that I think makes most sense for me. And I think that has everything to do with my personality.

[00:21:34] **Luvvie:** ooh, there's so much there. there's a million ways that I even thought about this interview, about what thing is to talk to you about. Cause there's a million things that I could have talked to you about. And it could be marriage, it could be [00:21:50] business, it could be that purpose. That piece was important as a foundational piece, because I think so often people assume so much about who we are and where we came from in our circumstances, when they see us in certain types of elevation.

[00:22:03] So I'm really thankful that you are sharing that with us because that piece of your story is so important and often left out. And the things that people write about, you say about you, they're always talking about the boss that is Fawn But I'm like, there was a time [00:22:20] when you had to rediscover who you were and.

[00:22:23] You went through all these different things to get there. So I'm so thankful for that piece because then when people see the version that you are now, it is understanding that you have conquered the mountains that people probably could not think about because they see you, they assume different things about you.

[00:22:40] **Fawn Weaver:** I also did the work though. Right. So I also did the work to be a whole person before the world ever knew me, uh, before, well, I mean, [00:22:50] 20 years before all this, this stuff has happened as it relates to, to Uncle Nearest and my different companies, I did the work. And so I think that that's the part that people hopscotch over is the piece of taking the time to put myself under construction.

[00:23:07] And to just figure out who am I, why am I here? And to, to really make that connection with God. So the way that people see me move, [00:23:20] they look at it and say, you know, she's a boss. She's a this, she's a

that. If you ask me, I'm going to say I'm a woman who is obedient and fully submitted to the will of the Lord. Those are two different people. Now to the external world, that looks like a boss, but that looks like a boss because I'm not moving the way that you

[00:23:37] **Luvvie:** Yeah.

[00:23:37] **Fawn Weaver:** I'm moving the way God tells me to move. So I don't look at myself and look boss. I look at myself and look obedient. Those are two different things.

[00:23:45] **Luvvie:** Hmm. Hmm. So now that you're running [00:23:50] this, it's so funny. Um, you run a company that I can only imagine you're making a million decisions a day, a week, you know, and you're making big decisions too, like high stakes decisions. And you do it with such clarity. One of the things that I want to talk about is when you started Uncle Nearest and as you're building, as you were building the team, do you remember any of your biggest challenges and pain points?

[00:24:15] **Fawn Weaver:** I think that that money is always a challenge that doesn't, it really doesn't matter [00:24:20] how big you get. The funny thing you, if you ask Elon Musk that question right now, he'll tell you money is a challenge. People think that the bigger you get, the easier it is financially. That's not true. The bigger you get, the more costs.

[00:24:33] And so that, that financial piece, when you're making really big moves. Continues to be a challenge. Like right now I'm in acquisition talks to buy another company and that company is larger than my company. And so the decisions I have to make in this current moment are very [00:24:50] critical. and and so if we do complete that acquisition and that's announced, people are going to go, how the hell did she pull that off?

[00:24:58] Because she now has acquired a company that's larger than her current company. But if you look at a lot of different businesses that we now know, that's actually not uncommon for a company that is moving and growing and has strong financial partnerships. To acquire companies that are actually larger than theirs, or at the very least are the same size, [00:25:20] that's not abnormal.

[00:25:21] What is abnormal is for that to be happening with a black person. What's abnormal is for it to be happening with a woman that you don't see very often, but you, if you actually look at some of our largest companies, you would

see that as having happened over and over and over again, because the majority of startups fail, but that's not the case for acquisitions. Because most of the time when you're acquiring that company has gone through the, hardest startup parts. So that what you're solving for at that point [00:25:50] is no longer the startup issues. What you're solving for something that you can uniquely bring to the table to take this business to the next level, but it already has a solid foundation.

[00:26:00] So we generally do startups, but where the money always is, is in acquisitions. So that's, that's why that's my focus.

[00:26:08] **Luvvie:** So before you even get to the acquisition piece of it all, When you started building Uncle Nearest, like the, when you were like, all right, this is the mission to build this spirits brand. I [00:26:20] know there's a deeper purpose attached to it. I want y'all to pick up that Forbes and actually just pick up Love and whiskey, the book, cause it's in there.

[00:26:25] how did you build such a powerful company as a black woman? Because I'm, cause a lot of the struggles that people who are listening to this are dealing with. Are things as team building, managing finances, actual critical business pieces of what it takes to operationalize your dream and your vision, like, what can you give us?

[00:26:48] Was something that was deeply [00:26:50] helpful to you as you built Uncle Nearest, which the scale of Uncle Nearest is infinite times. A lot of some people's scale.

[00:26:56] **Fawn Weaver:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. God, it's one thing, one thing over only. That's the foundation. This, this, this house was built on faith. And so I look at being a black woman as an absolute advantage. I look at being as a black woman as an advantage because God made me a black woman for a reason. So he's not going to give me something that puts me at a disadvantage.

[00:27:18] So I have, [00:27:20] I walk into every room and I'm like, With a thought process of, yeah, there's a bunch of billionaires, deck of billionaires, sense of billionaires in this room. And they're going to all remember my name by the time I leave. Not because I'm going to say something so profound, not because I'm going to try to be in everybody's faces to the contrary.

[00:27:39] I'm going to just move around. in the manner that I would, if I was at McDonald's, like, I walk into those rooms so confident [00:27:50] of who I am because God put me in those rooms. I think the reason why so many black women and people in general, but since you asked specifically about black

women. I think one of the reasons we have so many challenges is we pull God out of it. I am a true believer that no matter what is going on in the world, I'm not the one in control of it. My job is to be obedient. I'm not bothered during this election season with who is going to land in the White House. Why?

[00:28:20] Because I know whoever lands in the White House, I'm going to succeed under their agenda.

[00:28:25] Why? Because you can't get into the white house without, without going to God. It's a, it's a, it's just a very fundamental thing that we like to separate ourselves out. We have this life that sort of our life that we try to figure it out. But if we live a life that's truly submitted to God, as I do, then a lot of this stuff we're trying to figure out doesn't need to be figured out.

[00:28:46] If he allows for someone who I completely disagree [00:28:50] with every aspect of who that person is to go into the white house, My job isn't to second guess the half of the country that put that person in the White House. My job is to stay obedient from my part of this race. I have a baton. It's my leg of the race.

[00:29:05] And that's my only job. The entire race. That's not my part. That's God's part. He's got a whole lot of pictures there. So, so when I am looking at my life and what I am doing, [00:29:20] I just simply leave God in every single aspect. So I view it differently than I would say most black women who I speak to because I'm not looking at it and going, You know, black women don't get funding from VC We get less than 1 percent of funding from BC. And that's the conversation and that's the battle. And that's the fight I'm over here with the Lord going, why are you asking VC Why is that? Where you're trying to get your money from? If they're not giving the money. Why are [00:29:50] you asking that is clearly not where you should be getting your money from. And so we battle over here instead of just going, okay, Lord, if this is the company that you gave to me, if I am building what it is that you have called me to build, then that means that you have all the financial issues taken care of.

[00:30:07] So if I'm going through financial challenges, I look at it as this is going to be a testimony on the other side of this for somebody else. This financial challenge isn't even necessarily about me. So it's just a different

[00:30:20]

[00:30:20] mindset.

[00:30:21] **Luvvie:** you are right. And what Fawn just said has said to me personally, because even as I talked about 2023, one of the things that I ended

up getting to, and this, this season has almost been like a business memoir where I have been walking through, processing 2023. And I remember one of the things that you asked me in January, when we were at the Lake house was you said, so what do you think your lessons have been?

[00:30:43] And I said to you, I said, I'm still processing to try to figure out what the lessons are. And that [00:30:50] actually is a lesson that I've landed on It's that no matter what I did for my own efforts and brute force, it did not work. So clearly I needed to surrender and just give it to God and just be like, listen, two of us can't be driving this car.

[00:31:06] Because I clearly thought I was going to be the driver. I'm not the driver because no matter how much I tried hard, it didn't work. So clearly it was like, take your hands off the wheel. This is not your car to drive. And I'm like, so it took me a minute to get [00:31:20] that real lesson

[00:31:21] **Fawn Weaver:** this is how you know whether or not you've actually turned things over to the Lord. Because people will say, I turn, I'm turning this over to God. I'm turning this over to God. This is how you really know if you've turned something over to God. If your shoulders hurt, your back hurt, your neck hurt, you haven't turned it over. It's that simple.

[00:31:36] It's a physical

[00:31:37] pain. Everybody wants to look at the mental, but it's a physical, the Lord has it operate physically so that we know we're not submitted because he says my yoke is easy and my [00:31:50] burden is light. So that means that if what is on you is not light, you have taken a part of the yoke that wasn't for you. So I just keep it light. So when I go in

[00:32:00] Not

[00:32:00] **Luvvie:** the drag.

[00:32:01] **Fawn Weaver:** that, listen, I went in, I went in, we were, uh, when we were at the lake house before you were there or no, after you were there and I went in for a massage and I'm literally getting a massage. And it was so funny because the woman massaging me is talking [00:32:20] about how light My back like there's not any knots there.

[00:32:24] No, and she's just massaging me And she had come to the conclusion girl that i'm a stay at home wife. That's taking Because She's like man your life

is real good you must be chilling and vacationing at all times Because I didn't have the stress my neck or my back. So she came to a conclusion Now, mind you at [00:32:50] any given moment, and this has always been the case is as I've been building my company, I have, I have been so clear about the control aspects of it.

[00:32:59] And so making decisions that keep me in control means that I'm sacrificing financial decisions. A lot of times it is not for the faint of heart, because when I have gone to do a series round, for instance, I've had to make decisions and said no during times where the bank account was negative and [00:33:20] every credit card was maxed out. That's the part where people fold. And I look at that and go, there's, there is a lesson in this. That's not just for me, but it's for whoever else. And that we'll hear this on the other side of it. My responsibility, what God has been very clear in telling me that I need to do through this process is hold control So that's my one job is as I'm building

[00:33:44] Hold control.

[00:33:45] So that means that decisions that I make, they, it would be [00:33:50] easier if I did something differently. Like it would have been easier if I sold this company for a billion dollars. That would have been easy, but that wasn't my assignment. And so we have this mindset a lot of times that easy means that we've achieved something. I don't have that mindset. I don't have an expectation of ease. I don't have an expectation of ease because there is literally no biblical time where anything was of ease. The [00:34:20] closest we ever see to of ease. is King Asa and it's just everybody that was before him war. Everybody after him was war. And during that timeframe, the Bible tells us in Asa, it's one of those things where, you know, in Chronicles, it goes through all these different things.

[00:34:34] So if you sneeze, you're going to miss Asa. But during my period of construction or being under construction, for whatever reason, Asa appealed to me because the, the verse says, And the Lord gave Asa rest, he gave him peace during his [00:34:50] years. And so I remember reading that and, and being a person that had no, no peace.

[00:34:54] At that time and going, my prayer is going to be the life of Asa with the exception of his ending. Because in the end he ended up making a deal with another King. And you know, a lot of times we'll go through our whole life faithful and then lose our minds at the end. I don't know why that is. A couple of Kings did the same thing, but what I loved about it is he gave him peace.

[00:35:12] So I've always prayed for this life of King Asa, but here's the thing. The Bible doesn't say he gave him ease It's he gave him peace. So [00:35:20] for me, I don't have an expectation of ease. I have an expectation of peace. So I might have everything to the outside world. If we're put on a camera and you could see all the things going on at any given moment in my life, in my business, the challenges that I experience in my business as I'm building this, if that could be put on a screen, it would take most people out. Because they would look at that and go, Oh girl, sell, sell, sell, sell. Like that's too much work. That is [00:35:50] so difficult. That's so much like the challenges you've already gone through pale in comparison to the challenges that you're about to go against as you're continuing to build. Do you really want to keep going at, at this, level of challenge, which is really what it is at a certain place.

[00:36:07] as you're building. And for me, if I didn't have the peace, then maybe they would have a point. But in the midst of all the challenges, I have

[00:36:18] peace

[00:36:18] So I'm simply going to [00:36:20] keep building and keep continuing, knocking out the challenges because I don't have an expectation of ease, just peace. Two different things.

[00:36:29] **Luvvie:** Ooh, ooh. Y'all need to run that part back. Just run. Go ahead and run that back, because those were more than a few words. Like, and I'll tell you Fawn, like being at the lake house, so Fawn and Keith. Invited me and my husband to their Lake house in January. And I told you this before, and I'll tell you this again, the Lake house and coming to the Lake [00:36:50] house with y'all for five days changed my life. It was an interruption of the chaos that I was dealing with, but beyond that, it was a God assignment that allowed me, like, I felt peace, And how you all poured into me, how you all like who you just are in my, and watching that for me was a possibility model. I feel like it was life changing in ways I'm still processing, but I'm sure about one of the two ways.

[00:37:19] [00:37:20] And then one of the nights while we were there, you and I were talking about your book, Love and Whiskey, which is now out in bookstores everywhere. Y'all go grab it. we ended up talking till four o'clock in the morning

[00:37:31] **Fawn Weaver:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. And you just had, like your ideas were just flowing in relation to my book. and it was so, it was so natural. That is clearly a gift of yours. And so I wanted to just lean into that [00:37:50]



gift Because I think sometimes when we are gifted at something that comes so natural to us.

[00:37:55] we take it for granted a little bit, right? So even when I think about when I first started my company and the way that I'm looking at press it's completely different than everybody else. I'm looking at what's more so product integration and, and product placement and, and bringing the product to where the press is already going to be.

[00:38:12] That to me was natural to the people around me that was revolutionary. It didn't mean that they weren't very [00:38:20] smart. It didn't mean that they didn't know how to do what they knew how to do and that they were the best at what they did, but they simply didn't have my gift. And so that night listening to you and just your different ideas with relation to my book, I already knew how I was going to market my book.

[00:38:38] But you added layers and elements to that, that neither my team nor I would have ever thought of. And there was great value in that. But also, I looked at it and said, [00:38:50] so how are you going to make this information available to other people? Because I get that you do it with ease. But this is a great value to other people.

[00:38:57] **Luvvie:** Yeah, and I was like, well, I mean I started the book academy and you were like, so I'm your client and I was like I wasn't pitching you to be my client. You was like So I'm your client.

[00:39:06] **Fawn Weaver:** Yeah.

[00:39:06] **Luvvie:** And I deeply appreciated that because in my rebuilding this moment, this last year, one of the things that I've been trying to be obedient to, like you said, it's like God's assignment.

[00:39:13] And I really do feel like the book Academy is one of God's assignment for me, for you, as you wrote Love and [00:39:20] Whiskey and watching how you are even talking about the purpose of the book, talking about the story of Uncle Nearest Jack Daniels. And just being on the Love and Whiskey Avengers team, I've also learned a tremendous amount.

[00:39:32] but number one, the championing that you've been doing of me is something so meaningful to me that I am just so grateful for, so grateful for.

[00:39:42] **Fawn Weaver:** Well, and it's, and it's so funny because you and I, we're so different in our worldview, right? Our outlook. And I think this is the part that, that [00:39:50] people miss It's that we like to surround ourselves with people that are exactly like minded. And that's not what Jesus did. there is aspects of us that are like very, very, very like minded, but then, but our worldviews are so incredibly different.

[00:40:07] And I have such an enormous amount of respect for your worldview. Even when your worldview counters mine, that doesn't matter. we're both operating in our purpose. And so we, [00:40:20] we get so frustrated when people don't think like us, we want to change them, we want to convince them. And it's no, no God allowed us to have different experiences.

[00:40:30] To have different worldviews for a reason. And, and I honor that. I champion any person who I believe is operating in God's will for their lives. I don't have to be in complete agreement with how, with the way that they see the world. I only have to know that they're operating [00:40:50] God's will for their life.

[00:40:51] For me to be like, tell me what you need from me.

[00:40:53] **Luvvie:** I mean, one, tell people real quick what Love and Whiskey is about.

[00:40:58] **Fawn Weaver:** Yeah.

[00:40:58] **Luvvie:** And then we can talk about real quick, how we've been working together and what the Avengers team been doing.

[00:41:03] **Fawn Weaver:** Yeah. So love and whiskey is, uh, it's really a seven year journey of me doing research. It took more than 30 historians, archivists, archaeologists, genealogists, and we pulled thousands and thousands and thousands of records from six different states, brought it all back to [00:41:20] the original home of Jack Daniel, where he grew up to tell the story of the first known African American master distiller, who was the first master distiller for Jack Daniels, the only known master distiller for distillery No 7 And in this process, in this journey, all of the things that led up to what everyone is talking about today. Is that journey is in the book and so it's, it's, it's part history in terms of the story of [00:41:50] nearest and Jack, but it's it's a little bit like if we were to combine the immortal life of Henrietta lacks right where she's, she's looking into the history.

[00:41:59] But it's as much about what is going on today. I'd probably say that's the best example. It's as much about what's going on today in the discovery of all those things and how those things tie into. The current time. So I don't want anyone to, to get the book thinking that it's a purely historical book, because that's not what you're going to get.

[00:42:18] You're going to get the history, but you're going [00:42:20] to get it, discovering it at the same time as I do how we discovered it documents that came up, that changed everything. So like when we purchased this 313 acre property, where we knew Nearest Green was the distiller and where we knew Jack Daniel grew up, What we didn't know until the local archivist came across it herself and called me like at eight, nine o'clock in the morning and said, you got to get down here to the archives and I get down there and she lays out three documents from me.

[00:42:47] Three lease documents that jack daniel [00:42:50] signed between jack daniel and the person who I purchased our property from dan cough Um or whose property that was then i'm looking at these three documents And it has you know jack daniel would like to change it to Would like to change it from this to jack daniel distillery and all the rest of that stuff And i'm looking at this and i'm saying to her.

[00:43:07] Well, what what is this? And she said, Fawn the property that you own, that's the original Jack Daniel distillery. Nobody, including us had any idea when we bought that property. it's a [00:43:20] rewriting to a certain degree of the story of Jack Daniel distillery and Jack Daniels, but it unfolded in real time.

[00:43:26] And I wrote about it happening in real time. So people are discovering things like that at the same time as I'm discovering them. When you look at, you know, old No.7 people have been debating for a hundred years what old No.7 means. Well, the original distillery number on my property. Where original Jack Daniel distillery is distillery No.7 but nobody knew that [00:43:50] so People experience with me at the same time that I learn it in a newspaper clipping from you know the late 1800s They learn that something that even Jack Daniel distillery didn't know that old No 7 was the reference to his original distillery number They had no idea.

[00:44:06] **Luvvie:** Um, um, also side note, I'm going to reach out to your assistant. Me, you're going to do a session shortly. Sometime in the next couple of weeks before your press tour starts. You have no, you officially have homework for me, but, what have I been doing on [00:44:20] the Avengers team? Tell the people

[00:44:21] what

[00:44:22] my role is

[00:44:23] **Fawn Weaver:** So we have a, we've got a pretty robust marketing team just in general because of what I do. And so what Luvvie does is she's on with our marketing team and she is, she's basically that person who spots what we don't spot and has us look at things in different ways because she's been studying books for so long and why they do well and the ones that don't do well.

[00:44:49] [00:44:50] And the, the missteps that different authors make that, I mean, there've been books that even you and I have looked at over the last year that 100 percent should have been New York times bestselling books and those authors made missteps and we could see it happening in real time and we'll be on WhatsApp going, Oh no, this person is not going to hit the list because of this decision they just made.

[00:45:13] But there's just, there's very basic things that, that I've learned a lot from you and, and how [00:45:20] to message that people just, I think that, that they naturally don't know. Like I can talk to the press all day long and that is just something that is, is innate to me without question. But in terms of messaging outside of the press.

[00:45:38] That is something that I think there's a lot of elements to it that people take for granted that you've studied for so long that you're able to add an element to it that [00:45:50] may not come natural or a person may not even think about. That's really important. So that's what you do. So everybody is like, Hey, Luvvie how this?

[00:45:58] Luvvie How

[00:45:59] do that?

[00:45:59] **Luvvie:** Listen, I, I am the one making sure everything is good. everything is already good, but I'm like, how can we plus one, it plus two it, and how can I watch her back and give and make sure that there's things that are being looked at because there's also something revolutionary happening in here that we'll tell that story on a separate day.

[00:46:15] there's a big goal for Love and Whiskey, the book. It's going to make the [00:46:20] goal. I'm not even close to being worried. It is done. God said it's

done. for you, I'll have you answer this question. When you are no longer here on this plane, what do you want people to say about you?

[00:46:32] **Fawn Weaver:** It's so funny. I don't know what it is about people in this question on legacy. I literally don't care. So for me, I care

[00:46:41] **Luvvie:** Really

[00:46:42] **Fawn Weaver:** listen. If when I die, my book is no longer here. My story is no longer here. The name Fawn [00:46:50] Weaver belongs to somebody else and they never knew there was another Fawn Weaver.

[00:46:55] I literally don't care. There's no aspect of me that cares

[00:47:00] that

[00:47:01] people remember me when I'm gone. What I care about is I get to heaven and my God says, My good and faithful servant. That's all I care about. I think a lot of the challenges and frustrations that people experience in this world.

[00:47:16] And I think this is something that, that broke down for me in [00:47:20] that bed, in that hospital bed, I don't live this life. For people

[00:47:24] to

[00:47:24] remember me, that means I get to move through this life with a level of freedom that I think a lot of people don't have. I get to say exactly what I believe, whether or not it goes contrary to culture.

[00:47:35] I don't care if you agree with what I, how I live, what I do, what I say, because I'm not looking for your praise. I'm not looking for your words. my obituary could be a blank sheet of paper as far as I'm [00:47:50] concerned. I know a lot of people like to write their obituary. Ooh Give me a blank sheet and sprinkle my ashes over some river somewhere and let them flow.

[00:47:59] I don't care. What I care about is well done my good and faithful servant. That's

[00:48:04] it

[00:48:04] **Luvvie:** come on, that is so good. And that's the first time I've ever heard that answer.

[00:48:12] **Fawn Weaver:** That's first time I've ever heard anybody say that,

[00:48:14] **Luvvie:** that's different.

[00:48:16] **Fawn Weaver:** But you've been around me. So now you know the freedom that I [00:48:20] experience in real life. I'm not bound by anything. That's because I'm not, I'm not doing anything for anybody here. So when I give, I don't have an expectation of gaining anything from the person I'm giving to because I'm not giving to that person to get something back.

[00:48:37] There's a lot of freedom when your entire life is giving to other people, expecting nothing back from them. But expecting it to come back from God, that's a different level of freedom. So that's the freedom that I operate in. [00:48:50] I give freely when I'm like, I'm backing, I'm supporting Luvvie We've got like you, everybody all in, but I'm expecting nothing back from Luvvie Nothing. people like, I'll give things to people and I will tell them don't give me a break on the price of this. I told you that too. Don't give me a deal. Don't give me a, because I am not doing it. With an expectation that I get something back from you. That's not who I'm looking for the repay from ever.

[00:49:19] **Luvvie:** Cause

[00:49:19] **Fawn Weaver:** [00:49:20] level of,

[00:49:20] **Luvvie:** God

[00:49:20] is the one that's got the gift for you.

[00:49:21] **Fawn Weaver:** that's it. You can't give me what he can give me. So whatever you gave me, if I was looking for something from

[00:49:28] what you're going to get back to me would shortchange me because he owns everything.

[00:49:32] So I

[00:49:33] want

[00:49:33] bigger bag. I don't want what you could give me. I want the bigger bag that comes from him.

[00:49:38] So there's a lot of things people see that happened in my life where it would seem like, you know, this person came out of nowhere and just helped to elevate my business or just helped to take me to another [00:49:50] level. And someone will look at that and be like, man, it's like, she just has people coming out from all over the place, helping set her up.

[00:49:56] And I'm like, yeah, yeah, yeah. That's cause I don't have that. I didn't have that expectation when I gave to this person, when I gave to this person, when I did the amount of time, my time is my most valuable thing. I freely give that to people so regularly that it's surprising to people when I still respond to every DM.

[00:50:15] I respond to all my comments. Like that is something that's rare. I don't block [00:50:20] nobody. On social media ever. That's the thing that is, I think different for people. Now, Here's the thing. Don't get me wrong. If I will restrict somebody's comments, if it seems as though they're trying to hijack my page, I don't have it happen very often, but I'd probably say a couple of times a month, I'll have to restrict someone.

[00:50:38] But the reason why I don't block them is I still want them to see what I have to say. I just don't want them hijacking my page and, and, and, and deterring the conversation. But I think it's [00:50:50] important that that communication still happens. So if they want to reach into me and they want to share something it may be at a different point in their life, when they have an ability to understand a little better because they've had a different experience.

[00:51:03] So I want them to reach in and I'm going to give them, you know, share with them, whatever the Lord tells me to share with them. At that time. my freedom is other level. I move in such a way that when I say something, I don't have an expectation that you will agree with me when I give, I don't have an expectation that [00:51:20] I will receive something back from you when I like, so my movement is just

[00:51:26] different because I'm not living from my obituary.

[00:51:29] Oh.

[00:51:31] **Luvvie:** Let me out. Where's the TED talk? This is all the TED talk. See, this is. Listen, first of all, I thank God for you. I thank God for you

honoring, not just the obedient assignment, but the assignment, part of the assignment for you is also in you [00:51:50] being this person. Because you're showing what is possible, what is different, what is, uh, you know, attainable for all of us in a certain way.

[00:51:57] If we actually do some of the work, it is such a revolution to hear this. Like there are people who are going to be listening to this, who have never heard some of these words before, I've heard it because I've talked to you. this is the conversations you get from Fawn.

[00:52:09] Even when you're standing outside. Stand by elevator loitering at two o'clock in the morning at a conference. Like this is who she is at all times. This is not just a press interview. And [00:52:20] I am thankful for your sisterhood because you have shown me how sisterhood is a verb truly. And I am like deeply grateful.

[00:52:29] You, your belief in God is bringing me back to my deep connection. And that in itself is something I am boundlessly thankful for.

[00:52:40] **Fawn Weaver:** I'm thankful for you. I'm grateful that that the world has you and and has your heart and and has your intelligence. I am. I am grateful for that.

[00:52:49] **Luvvie:** [00:52:50] Man, so this is amazing. I will see you in Chicago

[00:52:54] for the uncle, the, the love and whiskey tour in Chicago. Y'all the tour begins across the country. Tell us where people need to find tour information.

[00:53:04] **Fawn Weaver:** Yeah. So you can just go to [loveandwhiskeybook.com](http://loveandwhiskeybook.com) and all the information, the tour, the book, we have laid this thing out. Thank you Luvvie for helping with the strategy on this. We have laid this thing out where it will be [00:53:20] impossible for you to miss the book. You won't be able to go through an airport without seeing it.

[00:53:23] You won't be able to go into any of your bookstores without seeing it. This is, this is a book that will be so visible. It's just a little, it's just a little less visible than Michelle Obama, but I, but it's, And I don't know. And then we may be neck and neck in visibility once this thing comes out because we have



laid this out in such a way where you will not be able to travel the world and not see this book.

[00:53:47] **Luvvie:** We literally had to pull back on strategy.[00:53:50]

[00:53:50] **Fawn Weaver:** oh, yeah.

[00:53:50] **Luvvie:** Because we were like, we're selling too many copies.

[00:53:53] **Fawn Weaver:** Oh, absolutely. This is a conversation this morning. I don't know if you've seen it in the Slack, but it was the conversation this morning. then there's this balance that you taught us with regard to making sure that, that Amazon is only 50 percent of the book sales.

[00:54:06] Well, in this day and age, that's almost impossible. So the level of strategy that is having to go in that every single time Amazon sales are going up, we've got to make sure all the other booksellers are going up. So the strategy.

[00:54:19] is

[00:54:19] other [00:54:20] level. It is no joke, but we have in fact sold too many books for week one and

[00:54:28] **Luvvie:** We have sold too many books

[00:54:29] and probably week two at this point. So we,

[00:54:32] **Fawn Weaver:** listen,

[00:54:33] we still have two solid weeks. Before this book comes out. And so we've not even really done the, the launch week push at all. So that's going to be interesting. And we haven't really done

[00:54:45] any

[00:54:45] press around the book yet. And Lord knows there's going to be an insane [00:54:50] amount of press around it.

[00:54:50] So that's going to be the challenging part is having the sales where we want it to be on the weeks that we want it to be. So that this isn't something

that is, you know, hits the New York times, falls off the next week or two weeks later, we want there to be this momentum that continues to sustain it.

[00:55:08] And that takes a lot of strategy. So thank you for helping us to lay that out because none of us knew how to do that, including my publisher. And they're great. Love, love, love my publisher. But this is just a different level of [00:55:20] strategy.

[00:55:20] **Luvvie:** Yes. , this is exciting.

[00:55:21] **Fawn Weaver:** Yeah. Thank you for

[00:55:23] **Luvvie:** Thank you for Thank you for championing me. Thank you for your honesty.

[00:55:27] And this was a blessing to so many people in me, like this was not just the business strategy thing. No, I need y'all to hear the approach that allows you to live a purpose-driven life with peace. Not necessarily ease with peace, even as things might be going around you. So I'm excited to. See where love and whiskey goes.

[00:55:45] See what the next announcement is. See what the next acquisition [00:55:50] is

[00:55:50] **Fawn Weaver:** this conversation was about roots. It was about what's under the ground. We usually, when we're talking about business, we're always for business, marriage life. We're focused on the flowers, But the conversation that people don't have is on the part that's underneath the soil and the soil itself. So this conversation was soil and roots. I'll let all the other business people take care of flowers.

[00:56:12] **Luvvie:** Oh, from one fave to another.

[00:56:15] I so appreciate you

[00:56:16] Thank you so much for your

[00:56:17] **Fawn Weaver:** you. appreciate you.