

[00:00:00] I want to have a real conversation about podcasting business and why I'm not sure how long I'm going to do this podcast for. So, yeah, sit back. Let's talk about it.

Creating a life that is authentic, bold, and purposeful takes audacity and truth telling. It takes disruption. That is what it means to be a professional troublemaker. Professional Troublemaker is a best selling book, this podcast, and frankly, a life habit. And I'm your host, I'm here to bring you perspectives, deep dives, and conversations about culture, business, life, and leadership.

And welcome to Season 5, which I'm really excited about. This season is dedicated to the glory and grit of entrepreneurship. 2023 was my toughest year as a business owner. And there was a point where I was three months away from being bankrupt. So, let's talk about it. Let's get really real about running your own business.

The good, the bad, and the ugly. [00:01:00] Because while people love to glorify entrepreneurship, they often leave out the tough lessons, the failures, and the pivots that have had to happen. My hope after this series of episodes is that you feel more informed about what it truly takes to run a purpose driven business.

You feel less alone about all the times you messed up, and you walk away knowing what to avoid. So you don't make some of the same mistakes I've made. Let's get into it.

In 2018, I started the Professional Troublemaker Podcast. Well, it was called Rants and Randomness at that point. And I was bringing on guests though who I thought about as professional troublemakers.

But when my book Professional Troublemaker, The Fearfighter Manual, was coming out in 2021, I rebranded this podcast to the real name that it should have been all along, which is Professional Troublemaker. And here's the thing, throughout all the seasons that I've done, throughout all these years of Professional Troublemaker, I've been so clear how impactful [00:02:00] this podcast has been to a lot of people.

But the truth is, this podcast has cost me a lot of money, and it's always been a heavy lift.

So let's talk about why. I've always internally produced this podcast all these years. I've barely ever had ads. So while I'm running my company, doing the

other things that generates revenue, the other things that are part of my purpose work, the speaking, the writing books, using my voice out loud, the content creation, all these different things.

I've kept this podcast going in different ways. And last year. As my company was crumbling, I did do a short season because Little Troublemaker was coming out. The thing I'm clear about this whole time and why I've actually kept on doing it is I've loved doing this podcast. And hearing the notes and the thoughts from y'all as you are talking back to me, as you send me messages online about it has been really meaningful to me.

But this podcast has taken a lot [00:03:00] out of me. So since I started, six years ago, almost seven years ago, producing this podcast is a heavy lift. And I've usually had somebody else on the team managing it internally, and to create every episode we actually did the math.

At one point it was taking us 20 hours every week. Because every episode has to be recorded. We have to book the guests. And then we create a lot of digital assets to promote it. Because the thing about podcasts is if you don't promote it, a lot, Nobody gets to understand that it's out. Nobody gets to listen to it.

So for every episode, we will create three audiograms,

which are snippets of our guests voice saying something really dope and then we will create three quotes from them We'll post it on social we post it across all my platforms I would pick and finalize what pieces of content Would be the ones that are chosen for each episode to make sure it's hard hitting So yeah, we did the math at one point at [00:04:00] its highest point each episode would take about 20 hours between producing the actual episode, recording, coming up with content, putting the content up, and then posting it across all the social platforms.

Yeah. We were around 15 to 20 hours while we were doing other things. And When we first started, we had a huge listenership. Like each episode would get 30 to 40, 000 downloads. So the heavy lift was making sense. Cause we're like, we're, we're having reach. We're having reach. And even from the beginning, I've wanted to be a part of a podcast network.

I've wanted to just be a part of a network where, for example, I would just need to show up and record and internally the network would handle everything else and I post across my platforms. And over the years, we just couldn't get one. We just couldn't get a podcast network. But I kept on doing this podcast because it

was energizing, because I love connecting [00:05:00] with you all and creating in this way.

I love how personal a podcast feels. It feels like you're having a conversation, like you're sitting in my living room. And as an introvert, I don't know if y'all know that I'm an introvert in my core. I'm It feels good to be able to touch and talk to y'all in this way. Cause I really do feel like I'm talking to you, you know what I'm saying?

So I've loved how I can come on, tell you my thoughts about the world, about my business, being able to tell the truth without a middleman, but y'all it was costing money. There was one point where I was recording this podcast actually from 2018. To 2020, I was recording this podcast in a studio. I had a sound engineer and everything.

Shout out to the Chicago Recording Company. They held me down. And then during the pandemic, I moved it to my home. So I had a whole setup in my house. But again, if you don't promote a podcast, you can't see it. So As we're creating all these graphics, we're [00:06:00] using all this company time. Mind you wasn't bringing in money.

So I'm spending money on it. I'm spending team time on it. And this last season that we just did season five, where I've been talking about the glory and great of entrepreneurship, one of the grit pieces of entrepreneurship is when you were doing something that is not bringing you money, that's actually losing you money.

So this last season. I said, I'm going to try to do this in a way that's right. We're going to try to bring in some ad revenue. So I actually got an ad network, not a, not a podcast network, an ad network and no ads came in. I think maybe one came in all season. Right. And I also had a producer for the first time this season.

And one thing happened that actually also like made podcasting even harder this year. A year ago or so, Apple did something with the way that they handle podcast analytics. So my [00:07:00] podcast analytics per episode went from being like 40 to 30, 000 downloads to like 5, 000. And why is this relevant? Because again, I've been looking for podcast networks for years, right?

Years and years. And a lot of podcast networks would want to own my name in the past. So I turned down because they would want ownership of my intellectual property. And I'd be like, nah, I'm straight. So then this last season, I

was like, I'm going to go out, find a podcast network for real. You know, as I'm producing it, as I brought a producer on board, we were looking for podcast networks.

They'll basically take on the heavy lift of producing, help manage and helping it grow. Because the other thing is my podcast has never had advertising partners to even help it grow. So the only people who even know it exists are people who see me. But again, when a lot of my stuff is being throttled on social media, promoting it on social media doesn't have [00:08:00] reach, you know what I'm saying?

So, yeah, this season I went out looking for, you know, podcast networks and one had terms that were not favorable to me and, you know, one that was my ideal network. I got in front of them and they love my content. They're like, your content is fire. Like we actually listened to it, but they were like, your numbers aren't high enough.

So, right. It's like chicken before the egg syndrome, like knowing that I was creating a one content, but knowing that this numbers thing is happening, knowing that I'm still losing money on this podcast.

Knowing that I don't have ads to support the actual episodes, plus I'm not being discovered by other podcasts, plus I'm still promoting it on social media, even though social media is throttling my reach, and the numbers are still what the numbers are.

And this is a year where I'm reassessing so much of what I do, how much I have spent so much time giving away a lot of valuable content. I have a [00:09:00] library, a massive library of content that I've built over the last 15, 20 years of being on these internets. Like it's naturally in me to teach and amplify what I know, but when certain pieces of my business and I bring in money and they're costing me money, I have to start thinking about, okay, So why are you doing it?

If it's costing you money and if you can't see a big return, why? Right? The love notes are a great return. Yes, but they're not a tangible return that can pay company bills. So. I'm recording this episode to basically be like, I'm sitting with my chief strategy officer to be like, can I even continue producing and spending money and time and energy on this podcast and just giving away intellectual property all the time, right?

Stories for free, everything, right?

You know, it's a real conversation that as business people, we need to be able to have and understand that as an artist, we're also very precious about our work, but some things you gotta start thinking [00:10:00] about the practicality. Does it make sense? Can it feed you? Are you getting more from it than you're giving?

And in this moment, I think especially end of the year, auditing the things that we do, the ways we spend our time, the things that take from us is necessary. I haven't fully decided on what I'm going to do with this podcast, but one thing that I'm clear about is that

if I'm to continue it, it's going to have to support itself, because otherwise it is a red line on our company budget. It is something that we're looking at that has never brought in enough money, but we spent tens of thousands of dollars on it. And as a CEO, as a leader, even if it's something that I love to do, I still have to ask the question of, what do you get from it?

And is this to the detriment of your business? Is this to the detriment of the work that you do? Understanding that as a servant leader, I want to give, give, give, give, give. Like leave it up to me. I'd be giving away all my money every day to [00:11:00] everything. Okay. And this year I hired a chief strategy officer and she's sitting in the seat and looking at company finances and is objectively like, okay, let's look at everything that we do.

What brings you money? What brings you energy? What is bringing you both money and energy? What is part of your larger strategic plan for where you want to take the company? And what will allow you to do it in a way that'll be fulfilling and not burn you out? One of the things that we're seriously discussing is possibly putting my podcast behind my patreon like If you're listening to this and you just don't know, I have a Patreon community that I started a few months ago because I really realized that I want to deepen my community and my reach to my audience outside of social media, right?

Like, social media is increasingly throttling our content. It's, it's keeping, you know, our content away from the people who want to hear from us. And with my library [00:12:00] of work, it's harder and harder to reach people who actually want to hear from me. So I started my Patreon a few months ago. And in that Patreon, I've built, like I started building out my library.

We have SOPs in there, you know, including a business operations checklist that I use to run my company. And I started thinking, well, what if I put the podcast behind the Patreon, right? In the Patreon, we also have the video

episodes of every podcast interview from this season, especially Fawn Weaver's that's in there.

Like that episode was gangbusters. Okay. Dr. Joy Harden Bradford's is in there. Tiffany Alicia, Sally Thornton, Morgan Debon, like we have those episodes behind that paywall, those, those videos, right. Because I actually subscribed to a Patreon called the cutting room floor. that is this podcast that's hosted by a fashion expert and it is only available if you're a subscriber to that Patreon.

And I happily pay it because it's incredible content. I'm bringing y'all into this [00:13:00] real decision right now because in a season where I've been super vulnerable about the ways I saw my company crumble, the ways I've been rebuilding it back up and I really did this year in a way that makes me so proud.

I think this is an important conversation to have that I can't leave out that we don't often have out loud. on the platform that I'm questioning whether I should continue. It's important to know how decisions like this have to be put into your business practice. The things that you love to do, are they to the benefit of your business or are they to the detriment?

Now detriment is a heavy word, but it might just mean, is it losing you money or energy? And if it is, you have to justify why you continue to do it. If you have stakeholders, one of the great things that I did this year was bringing my chief strategy officer on, shout out Susie. And that objective look at what I'm doing has been helpful because leave it to me.

Look, I want to do all the artist stuff. Like I'm super close to everything. Everything feels important. Everything feels [00:14:00] urgent. And I'm like, yes, I want to serve. Yes. I want to do more of that. And she's like, but at what cost? I want you to start thinking about all the things that you do. and start thinking about what is the cost of everything that you do.

So we're putting all our revenue streams on the table and saying, okay, what are the profit margins of everything? For the things that are costing more money than they're bringing in, I have to be able to identify the win. I have to be able to identify and defend why it's still on the table. And I'll tell you this podcast is for me as a creative is it's fulfilling to be able to tell my story, to be able to share my lessons.

I love getting the responses from y'all, but I ain't even going to hold you. When she sat there and asked me, but what is it doing for you? Is it getting you speaking engagements? Is it selling more copies of your books? Is it building

your Patron? Is it allowing you to rest because it is making money and building your brand equity [00:15:00] in a tangible way?

Or is it just something nice that you like to do?

I said, drag me. So this holiday season, one of the things that I'm going to do, I'm going to sit back and I'm going to think, I'm going to think, I'm going to journal, I'm going to pray. I'm going to really audit. What am I doing? Why am I doing it? And how is it serving me? And has it gone past the expiration date?

Like in the next season of my life, what are the things I want to be doing? Okay. It's interesting that this has been a year where I have traveled the least, probably in like 10 years, this has been a year where I have employed the least amount of people in at least six years. Shoot. It's the year that I've spoken the least in like eight years.

But what's been different about this year is I have been sitting in more peace than I have in a long time, if not ever. [00:16:00] And what has allowed my company to be rebuilt? Like I told y'all, it's the book academy. It has really supported this company in a real way. And that is what I'm strategic planning around.

And I have been in a personal and professional auditing already, but when I tell you everything is up for audit, I mean, it's, everything is up for audit. Everything, the why's, the what's, the how's, the who's up for audit. So before this year is over. I hope you start auditing a bunch of stuff. It's necessary.

I am about to step into 40. I will turn 40 on January 5th, 2025. A new decade, and it feels like a whole new segment of my life. So this is all also on time. On point. And however way I decide to move forward, deciding what to do with this podcast, if I'm going to monetize it in a different way, if I'm going to let it go, if I'm going to continue to do it as is, [00:17:00] which I don't think that's the decision.

Just know it's after a bunch of auditing and sitting around and asking questions of myself.

What has this podcast done for me? I don't think we allow ourselves, especially those of us who pride ourselves on being generous people. I don't think we ever allow ourselves to ask the question. What is this thing that I am doing, doing for me? I know what it's doing for everybody else. I mean, it's allowing me to like, share my story.

Yes. But I can also share my story in other ways for other people. A lot of people have messaged me this year and said like, your podcast has changed my life. And I'm like, did you buy my book after that? Did you, you didn't buy my book, but okay. No shade. But, um, yeah, you know, I think it's okay to ask the question.

What is this thing? this relationship, this friendship, this project, this thing, whatever the thing is doing for me. We're so used to giving, giving, giving, [00:18:00] but part of being a good recipient of gifts is also asking, right? So right now I'm asking myself a bunch of these questions.

Regardless, I'm thankful for the people that come across our paths in seasons of our lives who allow us to see things different, who ask us questions that we might not have asked ourselves. Like you all know my favorite prayer is let my helpers find me. That has been consistently a prayer this year especially.

And this has been a critical year where I'm like, I need my helpers to find me. And they have. I need the right people to find me. I need the right clients to find me. And God has been answering that question. So this moment of reflection is with that. I'm really proud of this podcast. And let me tell you, I know this season.

By the way, this season of this podcast, I feel like is the best season of this podcast ever. [00:19:00] I feel like what I've created in season five is award winning, is game changing, is, is possibly life changing for some. And I'm proud of that. So maybe I'm supposed to go out on top with that pride of saying like, man, I left when it was great.

Right? So I'm proud of this podcast. I don't regret a dollar that I've spent on this podcast. And I'm thankful that I had the means to even do it. I'm grateful for the privilege to spend money on something that has been fulfilling to me for five, six years, almost seven actually. Yes, cause 2018, it's about to be 2025.

Yes, seven years. Mmm, seven. Okay, seven. Mmm. So, yeah, all the work that I've been able to do has made me really proud, that much I know. And I will continue to do work that makes me proud. For me right now, there's two things that I'm really gonna pour my [00:20:00] energy into. One, The book academy and to my patron which is at patreon.

com slash lovey Because I'm gonna double down on My energy like Sally Thornton said earlier this season follow your energy that has become my business strategy right follow my energy and The work that I'm doing with the

book academy Is especially energizing to me because I realized that when I stand in my purpose You I can really help other people embody theirs.

And that really feels like what I am doing with the Book Academy. And in my Patreon, my tagline is doing life and work better. So I'm dropping resources in there, you know, dropping reflections. I send them voice notes. So they have like a mini podcast in there because I send them voice notes on a regular basis of things I'm thinking about, reflecting about.

Um, but yeah, and if you're listening to this and you are somebody who's Interested in writing a book, you know, because you know there's a [00:21:00] story on your heart, I can help you. So I invite you to come into the book academy. That's the book academy.org. And if you listen to this before December 20th, we're actually launching this week.

So the cart is open. So if you come into book the book academy.org, you can find out more information about that. Okay. But yeah, if you're a long time listener of this podcast, where I really, really invite you to join is my Patreon. That is where I am spending some of my energy. I'm actually making, basically making it into my own mini social network.

You know, it's almost like, it's like a paid blog, a podcast, and a YouTube channel. masterclass on life and work. You know what I'm saying? It's like my version of virtual mentorship. It's my way of deepening community because I think with this election, the way that it went, one thing we will need more than anything now is safe spaces and community.

So that's what my Patreon is. And remember when I talked to y'all about the book club that I wanted to create? I'm going to create that book club. In my Patreon. I am. So listen, a [00:22:00] bunch of y'all were like, yes, we want the book club coming to the Patreon. All right. It's patreon. com slash lovey. We'll put, I'll put all these links in show notes.

So yeah, community cannot be dependent on social media or my podcast that I can't control the reach because if that was it, nobody would ever see my work. So come inside the Patreon. Um, I also do monthly Q and A's in there to answer your questions about life, about business, about mindset, whatever you need.

You know, I'm dropping templates and SOPs and business documents that I used to run my business. And I, you know, I'm bringing in sessions. I actually, in the next month, I'm going to be bringing my hypnotherapist into a session in

my Patreon. Like, and she's going to do a meditation for us around Abundance Mindset, because the other thing I didn't even talk to y'all about this year.

Maybe I mentioned it in an episode. I don't know. But I started hypnotherapy this year and that changed my life. Like how grounded I've been since I started hypnotherapy, how peaceful I've been, the way I've been able to hear God [00:23:00] clearer, the way I've been able to be more still. I'm telling y'all hypnotherapy changed my life.

Um, yeah, like it's wild. So I'm actually going to have my hypnotherapist come and do a session, uh, uh, for members of my Patreon.

And the other thing is I continue to, I will continue to share my journey. In a vulnerable way because it's important for us to have that. It's important for me to have that. You know, have that space because I think that's very much tied to my purpose work.

You know, people think about me as the truth teller that like, you know, says bold things. But I think in this season, my truth is looking like. Excavating myself, excavating my thoughts, excavating lifelong traumas and triggers, and then using that to build the life that I want, you know? So yeah, telling the truth includes telling the truth about the realizations we're making about ourselves.

That is very much an assignment. That, I know I am being called to stand in, and I'm gonna always tell y'all the truth, even the hard truths, even the truths that show we don't always have it together. In [00:24:00] which we are unsure. You know, I'm recognizing that it's all of, all of it is a part of the journey, the mistakes, the lessons, the ponderings, the reflections, the questioning.

It is all a divine part of the journey. So sharing it with you has been an honor of mine. And no matter what decision I make around this podcast, the fact that you have stuck with me for the last six, It's almost seven years with this podcast is so meaningful to me. The fact that many of you have shared it with your friends.

The notes that you send me are just, Oh my gosh, they just make my day and it all matters to me. You know, truly I get emails sometimes from y'all when you're like, Oh my gosh, I know you hear this all the time. Nah, it always matters. Every single time matters. You know what I'm saying? Right? No matter how much I hear something.

Knowing and hearing your story is incredible. And I don't take it for granted ever, ever, ever. And honestly, that impact is probably what has kept [00:25:00] me doing this podcast. So your notes have kept this podcast going to be quite honest. Cause when I was like, yo, this is losing all the money. I kept on coming back to man, but somebody on the other side needs to hear your voice in this way.

So understand that your reflections to me are meaningful. The ways you send comments in about the podcast makes me feel like somebody cares. So yeah, I know sometimes people look at me as lovey who has all her shit together. I do be having a lot of my shit together, okay? But I do think a disservice is done when people see me as having all my shit together or not needing help.

Because I am powerful and confident and assured and God's child and anchored. Yes, in spite of that, I still need certain pieces of help. I think it's important to still raise my hand and say, yeah, no, this thing might not be going as well as I want it to be going, you know? So yeah, I've loved this podcast. Professional Troublemaker, for me, is a life habit. [00:26:00] It's a best selling book, and this podcast has been such a great guide in the process. And, like, low key, a part of me is still like, I hope a podcast network will be like, Yes, we want to invest in you, Lovey.

Come on. We want to help her grow this incredible podcast. Because, let the record show, this podcast is one of the best out there in terms of content. I firmly believe that. But Hey, if it doesn't happen, I'm okay with it because however, and whatever decision I make is the one I'm supposed to make that much.

I'm confident in. So I'm not even worried. Whatever decision I make is the right one. So I'm not internalizing what happened with the analytics. I'm not internalizing the fact that I couldn't find a podcast network and that all these other podcasts are getting signed.

You know, it's easy to internalize it. It is very easy to, but I said, you know what? If it ain't for you, it's not for you. So what you going to do for you? What you going to do? But I'm just basically like, if the dollars ain't making sense no more, I might just have to [00:27:00] make a pivot.

Or maybe I'll just make it available to patron subscribers. I don't know. I think that's where we're leaning right now. We're just ending it.

If I end this podcast, it doesn't mean I'm done with podcasting, period. I'm still down to host people's podcasts. I'm still down to be a guest on folks podcasts. I'm still going to do that, but you know, I might create another podcast at some point. All the possibilities are still open. This is specifically about this podcast and this way with this lens.

Regardless, I am feeling good about 2025 about what it's offering. I am purging digitally and in real life, like literally even purging my digital files, like deleting stuff that I'm like, why do I still have this file? Why is it still here? This meeting, I'm never going to watch it. So delete it. So this is, you know, always a time that's good to reflect what's got to go, but for real, this year is even deeper than it used to be.

Last year I was in the middle of crumbling [00:28:00] and I was in crisis mode. So my audit was not, in peace and it wasn't with deep clarity. This year it is. So I'm moving different. So I'm looking at all of it differently. If you're listening to this feel free to message me.

Don't be like, Oh my gosh, you didn't say nothing. Go ahead and message me.

And the other thing I was thinking was, you know, this is the fifth season of this podcast. Five is my favorite number. Always has been. And I was born January 5th. And I was born in 1985. And my delta number is 25. Okay. Five times five. You know, maybe, maybe five just needs to be the last season. Okay. Maybe, maybe that's very much completion, even though seven is the number of completion.

I firmly believe that TV shows, for example, five seasons is the perfect amount. So maybe this is also another part of it you know what? Maybe this is God tapping me on the shoulder. Like, look, I want you to release this so you can have energy for what I have for you for this next season.

These are the things I am thinking about just so y'all know. [00:29:00] So regardless though, if you love this podcast, if you love my work, if you love my voice, Even if I get rid of this podcast, there's still a million ways to find me, but there's three ways that I invite you to engage in my work. At the minimum, sign up for my newsletter, the love letter, L U V V L E T T E R.

com. It is a newsletter that I send out every week talking about culture, business, leadership, growth, sign up for that. You know, if you're not a part of my Patreon or Book Academy yet, sign up for the newsletter first. And then, join my Patreon if you want to be in community and have greater access to me.

If you see me as a mentor, Patreon is where I can really mentor. Okay? Come on in there. The community is lit. It's dope. Come on in. Alright? And then three, if you want to write a book, if you're interested in writing a book, if you need help, I got you. Come into the book academy.

That's thebookacademy.org.

So yeah, my Patreon is [patreon.com slash \[00:30:00\] lovee](https://patreon.com/lovee). All right. And then if you want to write books, I can help you. The book that's been sitting on your mind, on your spirit. I got you. Let's get it out of your chest, out of your head and onto paper. Let's turn you into a successful published author. So let the Book Academy help you.

So go to thebookacademy.org for more details on that. Okay. How will you know what I decide on? I'm probably gonna put it in my newsletter first.

So I hope you all have an incredible holiday season and may 2025 bring us growth, peace, abundance, flow, and joy. ease, clarity, grounding, anchoring, and let us embody our purpose in anything that we do. Let us embody truth, purpose, and divine alignment.

So that we know that we are doing what God has for us. Amen. Amen. I love y'all.

Hope you are surrounded by love in this holiday season. And I hope [00:31:00] 2025 lights the way for you. Happy 2025.

If you dig what you just heard, and want to make sure you don't miss another episode of Professional Troublemaker, subscribe on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or wherever you get your podcast fix. And leave a review. Let the folks know this is valuable content. You can follow me at Lovee everywhere on social media, L U V V I E.

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