



Rants and Randomness with Luvvie Ajayi

Spend Your Privilege (with Brittany Packnett Cunningham) - Episode 37

Released: February 18, 2020

Yo, my peoples! Welcome to Rants and Randomness. I'm Luvvie, and this is my show where I'm talking about things I'm loving, things I'm side eyeing and having amazing conversation with amazing people. I'm here at the Chicago Recording Company bringing you the radio voice as always.

On this episode, I am bringing you a few feel goods. I'm feeling good about [Hair Love](#), about [writing in the New York Times](#), about *Parasite* winning at The Academy Awards. I'm ranting about disinformation and why we need to look out for it. Especially right now. I'm spotlighting the [She Did That](#) documentary on Netflix and my guest is the brilliant [Brittany Packnett Cunningham](#).

So yeah, let's get into it.

Feel Good

[00:00:51]

All right. So I'm feeling good about the Oscars because *Parasite* won four awards - Best Picture, Best Director, Best International Feature Film and Writing. It became the first non-English language film in Oscar history to win the award for Best Picture. Bong Joon-Ho won all three of the categories for which he was nominated. It's epic.

I mean, the rest of the show was pretty monochromatic. Besides my girl, [Cynthia killing the stage](#) and being nominated for her amazing role in *Harriet*, but *Parasite* deserve the win. And for them to make history to see this immigrant onstage winning the Best Picture of the year at this super white event. I think it's a win.

The other thing that I loved that made me feel really good was the fact that [Hair Love](#) won an Academy award. It won Best Animated Short. Matthew A. Cherry, came up with it and Karen Rupert Toliver, and I remember when he first announced [Hair Love](#) years ago, I instantly backed the Kickstarter, so it's now watch it and to see it when an Oscar, y'all, that's so amazing! So congrats to them for that. It feels good to see. And he, Matthew [basically manifested this](#), there's tweets from 2012 where he said, "I want to one day win an Oscar." And here it is.

Other thing I'm feeling good about, I [wrote for the New York Times](#). In 1960, 17 African countries, including Nigeria, gained their independence from their colonizers. And I was asked to [contribute to a special section in the Times](#) to commemorate the 60th anniversary of what is considered the Year of Africa. For me to see my byline in the New York Times, it's incredible. And to do it while talking about

the cradle of civilization is a whole moment. And I'm in the company of some brilliant people, like Wayétu Moore, David Adjaye, Dinaw Mengestu, Omar Victor Diop and of course my sister Bozoma Saint John. It's an amazing piece. I've been getting so much, so much good feedback about it.

And I bought eight copies and I will be sending it to my mama and everybody else in my family. So I just want to thank Veronica Chambers for seeing my work, for wanting me to be a voice in this special project that she edited and for having me, because this is a meaningful thing for me as a writer. It's such an honor to see my name in this, in this publication, talking about the continent that I'm from. So yeah, that was amazing. Look at the show notes. There's a link to it to go read it. My piece is called [Africa, the Motherland](#).

Rant

[00:03:32]

So my rant this week is about disinformation and how we're so quick to spread fake news and news that's not accurate or well thought out.

This is really important right now, because as we gear up for the 2020 election - disinformation, it's a big thing that could actually decide who ends up winning these elections because the internet now allows us to have all information at our fingertips, including inaccurate information. And there's already, they said something like, there's \$1 billion disinformation campaign to reelect the president.

They're spending a lot of money on social media, on just the web in general. And even on television, radio, to trick us into thinking about things that are not real or accepting information or just bad propaganda. So I want us to be more careful about how we share information and what information we decide to pass on.

Years ago, I wrote a piece on my blog called [5 Things To Do To Avoid Passing On Fake News On Social Media](#). It is not more relevant than it is right now. 'Cause I realized that we're very quick to press share on something or to be mad about something before finding out the full information. Or we read a headline, and all of a sudden we think we know exactly what the thing says. So we will judge a book by its cover. We'll judge what is being said in something by a ten second clip or just the title of the piece. So, I want us to be very cognizant about that.

One - click the post and read beyond the headline. You see the top of the posts, you think you know exactly what it's about. You repost it with haste to share on or jeer what it is about, right? And then when somebody decides to click through, they go, "Wait a minute, what you think it says is not what it says." There's a lot of times when we see this happen, our Facebook accounts, and you know what's worse is when you tell somebody, "Hey, that's not actually real." They usually get mad. Well, it could be, yeah, we could play a really deep game of what if all day and end up in a black hole? Is it worth it? Be more detailed about how you're researching by just clicking through the post and reading beyond the headline.

The other thing I want us to do is look at the date. A lot of times we can see how people don't look at the date of pieces because y'all, we've re-killed Chinua Achebe bout 15 times. Like every time somebody posts about him dying. I'm like, that happened years ago. This is not new news.

The thing is. Because we skim everything, we hit share on everything. We're outraged about that thing that we just shared, not knowing that it's a five-year-old issue or it's something that's been resolved in other pieces. We're doing ourselves a disservice, and we're doing the people who are watching this a disservice. All of us have to be the gatekeeper of this, so look at the date.

The other thing I want you to do. So you, let's say you've looked at the date, you've read the headline, you've read the article. Now, go a step further and see if you can find something else that validates it. Google this thing, this subject and see if you can find something that's going to corroborate it. Because if it's from one arbitrary website and no other pieces and no other places, can you find this information being reported - pause before sharing it. Do some more research. Because if you can only find one link of this fact, it might not be a fact.

The other thing I want you to do, look it up on [Snopes](#) to make sure this thing is not satire and has been debunked. There's a lot of widely reported things that are considered fact that are not true. So then we end up perpetuating false things just because we haven't put in the work to research whether that is a fact or not. [Snopes.com](#) is a website that does a research work for you and tell you if a rumor is true, partly true or false. It's also lets you know, is something has been proved to be neither of these - unknown. So yeah, do that work.

And then I also want you to know your satirical websites. Facebook is trying to, they said they're trying to minimize bad news being passed around by now tagging sites that are considered satire, as satire.

I see it so many times. People posting pictures that they're like mad about or something that happened. Meanwhile, it's from a website that's like, you know, [Realorsatire.com](#) no, actually [realorsatire.com](#) is what you can use to prove whether a website is real or not, but you see a website that's like .info or you know, or dot a weird extension and people will report news that's reported there is real news. You got to know your satire sites, right?

[The Onion](#) is the leading one and they do satire. Well, like their satire is based in humor and just making fun of the culture. Some satire websites are just all about putting up news that's not real and calling it satire. So websites like Cream BMP, The Daily Currant, do your research y'all. These are not real. Stop linking to the stories on these sites as if they're factual. Every single day I see this on Facebook and I have to be like, "Hey, that's not a real website." So, as we're getting ready for election, 2020, I need us to be more, more stringent about information that we pass on and just to be more careful about what we are receiving as fact of what we're being told. We need to do our own research because we cannot trust the powers that be or these, or allow some of these platforms to do the work for us. So we got an be able to pause more if it means you can't share the post for another 20 minutes, cause you used to do 20 minutes of research. That's cool. You do not have to be first. You do not have to be first. This culture of first is dangerous. It is the reason why now we have a hard time with media

literacy because everyone is more concerned with fast than accurate. So that's my hope. Let us curb disinformation, let us curb fake news and let's do better. It's especially relevant now.

Randomness Spotlight

[00:09:41]

So this week I'm spotlighting a documentary that's on Netflix called [She Did That](#). The cool thing is I'm in it, I'm featured in it.

So it was created by Renae Bluit and the features [Lisa Price](#), [Melissa R. Butler](#), founder of [The Lip Bar](#), Tonya Rapley founder, [My Fab Finance](#), and me. [She Did That](#) is a documentary that is highlighting Black woman owned businesses and Black women entrepreneurs and telling our stories, telling the stories of our journey.

Renae approached me four years ago and asked if I wanted to be a part of this, and I instantly said, yes. Renae is amazing. She's ran her blog and her PR company [In Her Shoes](#) for probably over a decade. And for her it was important to further amplify the work that other Black women are doing. So she decides to do this documentary, had never done anything like this before, and she picked us who she knew, who she knows have prominent businesses and who are women who also talk about our journeys in business. But she wanted to give us a platform.

And for the last two years, this documentary has been screened around the country, but it recently got acquired to be distributed on Netflix. So now you can watch [She Did That](#) on Netflix and people have been watching it for the last two weeks. And you know, sharing on Instagram and Facebook and talking about how it inspires them.

I'm inspired by the stories of Lisa Price, who founded [Carol's Daughter](#), [Melissa Butler](#), whose [Lip Bar](#) - I use her lipstick all the time. Tonya Rapley, who is a like, super smart financial mind. Being in the company of these women is great, but also being able to know that our stories will be seen by people who are somewhere not believing that their dreams are possible. Somewhere, not knowing how to get started or maybe just not confident that they should even try to do their own business. I hope people watch the documentary and feel inspired and know that if we can do it, they can too.

There are 1.9 million Black women owned businesses that employ over 376,000 staffers and generate \$51.4 billion in total revenue. We are a force. We need to be supported, and I'm always excited to support Black businesses. I'm always excited to find out more who are doing really good things. And this documentary really puts it all at the forefront besides the five of us who are featured, Renae interviews, probably like another 20 like [Myleik Teele](#) is in there, Jessica Matthews, Denequa Williams-Clarke is in there. So they're, these are women that I know, who I've also talked about. So it's a great synergy. It's great content. And some of the feedback that people have been given us has been that they're especially excited that they can show this to their younger daughters to show them what's possible.

So, go on Netflix, check out [She Did That](#), watch it, you know, let us know how you love in it. If you pull out any gems in there, let us know which one hits you, you know, hit your heart the most. And I really do hope you watch it and you feel inspired and you feel proud if you're a Black woman, to see what other Black women are able to do. In their own places and spaces in the world. So yeah, go watch on Netflix.

And now for my interview with Brittany Packnett Cunningham.

Interview with Brittany Packnett Cunningham

[00:13:13]

Brittany: Hey, what's up fam?

Luvvie: Hey girl, Hey!

Brittany: Hey, are you in Chicago?

Luvvie: I am. Praise God.

Brittany: Listen, I just, people are always like. What's it like traveling so much? It must be exciting and I'd be like, you know what's exciting? My bed. My own front stoop is exciting.

Luvvie: Agreed. I'm always like, yo, when I'm going to be at home. I'm always like, yes! Thank God!

Brittany: Right? Like, Oh wait, you mean my sheets? My bathrobe? Yes, ok. Floors I cleaned? Yes.

Luvvie: My bathrobe! Oh, my bathrobe is super real. You know what? We so auntie.

Brittany: I'm washed, and I own it. I ain't got no problem with it.

Luvvie: Super washed. Like I am officially, like I carried the flag for the washed coalition. Okay.

Brittany: A hundred percent with no shame, no shame whatsoever. Like you too, one day at your best you can hope to be washed.

Luvvie: Yes! At your best you, (laughs)

Brittany: You know what I'm saying? I'm like, to be able to get to the age and the income level where you can be washed and like not have to run around working for other people. And not having to run around turning up with other people if you don't want to, if your surroundings are comfortable exactly the way that you want them. And that's what you'd rather be. Oh, please. Washed is a privilege.

Luvvie: Listen, I have, now I don't even have FOMO. I got JOMO, like joy of missing out. I'd be like, Ooh, I ain't gotta be there?

Brittany: A hundred percent. A hundred percent. You mean? Oh, you don't need me? Cool.

Luvvie: No problem. Y'all have a good time. I will watch y'all on Instastories. Okay. Good stuff!

Yo, Rants folks, I am excited for my first interview of 2020, and I am kicking things off with one of my boos of life, you know, powerhouse conversation with my girl, Brittany Packnett Cunningham. Okay, so you all welcome her to the show. Brittany.

Brittany: Hey. Hey, thanks for having me. I'm so honored to be at the top of the year, the top of the, depending on who you ask, the decade. This is a big deal.

Luvvie: This is a big deal, okay? I asked people on social, I said, "Who do you all want me to interview on Rants?" And your name came up a couple of times. It was funny as it was after I had been like, "Brittany, it's overdue for you to come on Rants."

Brittany: And I was like, "Luvvie, where's my invitation?"

Luvvie: I said, "You know what? Say less. Say less."

Brittany: I'm glad to be here.

Luvvie: Let me tell people how epic you are. Brittany Packnett Cunningham is a leader at the intersection of culture and justice, cited by the President Barack Obama as a leader whose voice is going to be making a difference for years to come. Brittany was recently named as a contributor for both NBC News and MSNBC, and is an unapologetic educator, organizer, and writer. Her book, [We Are Like Those Who Dream](#) is coming out early next year, 2021. You all look out for that.

Brittany was a fellow at Harvard's Institute of Politics, was active in the Ferguson uprising, and is co-founder of [Campaign Zero](#), a policy platform to end police violence. She's also the co-host of the four-time Webby Award-winning [Pod Save The People](#), and founded love and power, a hub created to inspire, empower, and outfit everyday people to seismically shift society. [Brittany's popular 2019 TED Talk](#) has garnered nearly three million views, and it's only been out for five months. Brittany, dang, this bio, yo.

Brittany: I'm trying to be like you.

Luvvie: Yo. That's so Black of you. I love Black people because the best compliment that we get is when you give somebody else a compliment. They're like, "I'm just trying to do what you do."

Brittany: You know, right? I'm trying to get like you. I'm trying to be like you. But you know what, though? Black people never say that if they don't mean it.

Luvvie: That's true.

Brittany: And that's what I really love about us.

Luvvie: That's true.

Brittany: We are a tough audience, but if we love you, we love you.

Luvvie: Yes. I always kick off every interview, because I want to know, what did you want to be when you were growing up?

Brittany: I mean, depending on the day, I wanted to be something different. For a while, I wanted to be a pediatric surgeon. And then I realized that's just because I thought George Clooney was cool, like *ER*, and I didn't really like science that much. I was like, "That's not the plan." For the longest time, though, I had my sights set on Broadway, actually. I grew up doing musical theater. I took a lot of dance. I grew up singing. I took acting lessons. I did a lot of stuff on stage.

My first professional play, I did a regional production of the play, *Once On This Island*. I played Little Ti Moune at the St. Louis Rep. My parents showed up like every night. They would alternate, so somebody was always there. My whole fourth grade class came out to see it. My dad would bring somebody new every performance. The cast came to my dad's church and they came over for Christmas and Thanksgiving. I mean, those people are like my family now. And some of them are successful actors now in their own right.

But yeah, that was my dream for a really long time, but I don't think it was a dream I was willing to starve for. And so, I had to really be more intentional about, what was I willing to do, even if it required all of me. What I naturally returned to is activism because, to be truthful, I never really left it. That's how I was raised. So here we are. Yeah. But I wanted it to be on somebody's stage.

Luvvie: I mean, and now you are, but it's in a different way. What was seven-year-old Brittany like?

Brittany: Seven-year-old Brittany was rambunctious, very talkative. I was always the kid who got the report cards with the comments of "Brittany is brilliant and she's really engaged, but she talks entirely too much, and I cannot get through a lesson without her being..." what my mom would call a chatty Cathy. I certainly was very active. I think really gregarious and friendly. But I could also make my own fun. So, my younger brother, it's just the two of us, but he's four and a half years younger than me. So I was by myself for long enough

to make my own fun and entertain myself and make up songs and dances that I was very entertained by, even if no one else was.

So yeah, I like to think the seven-year-old Brittany was certainly a warm person to be around. But she was also somebody who was trying, like most young people at that age, to figure out who she is in a world that is constantly telling her that she's wrong. So that was and still is the journey of my life, right? Returning to myself with the confidence of knowing that who I was designed to be is exactly right in God's eyes.

Luvvie: Come on. How did your parents support this kid, this seven-year old?

Brittany: I mean, I had the best upbringing. I'm so grateful because my parents were really intentional about providing me the kind of cultural education and confidence they knew I wasn't going to get at school. So, in order to get a really academically rigorous education in St. Louis in the '80s and '90s, they made the really tough choice that lots of Black parents have to make to send their child to a school where they knew they wouldn't necessarily be loved, but they would learn a lot.

So, I went to predominantly White private schools. But that meant that when I was home, I was reading Frederick Douglas and watching *Eyes On The Prize* and having to discuss it over dinner and write book reports. That meant that I was engaging with my father's Black liberation theology all the time. It meant that I was sitting in the back of his college classes and learning about what it means to be a Black person of faith and why it means that you cannot be anything less than fully committed to justice because that is both what God has for us and what our people's legacy requires of us.

They were also just people who encouraged my creativity. They would let me get dressed in the morning. And thankfully, I think I've always had some nice style, if I do say so myself.

Luvvie: Yes, you did. You fly.

Brittany: They would let me pick my clothes sometimes and they would let me teach them the little songs that I would write, and encourage me in my enjoyment of dance and musical theater, and music and art, and all of those kinds of things. There was never any kind of, what are you going to do to make money conversation? They just wanted me to be my most thriving self. And I know that that is a really hard choice for parents who just want to prepare their children, especially Black children, for the realities of the world.

So I'm really grateful that they both made me clear about who I am and whose I am, and the responsibility I have, but also just gave me the freedom to kind of be and grow into myself.

Luvvie: That “whose I am” is so clutch. I think a lot of times it's what ends up grounding us, especially in the tough moments. When you were going to start college, what was the plan? What was your major?

Brittany: My major, so legal studies at my alma mater, Wash U, you couldn't be pre-law as a major, right? It was a minor. The plan was to go to law school. So I made legal studies, my minor, and I vacillated on an English major as my degree, and ended up being my minor, and African-American studies actually ended up being my major, which I'm really, really grateful I chose. Yeah. But the plan was to go to law school and I did not.

Luvvie: What happened?

Brittany: I started teaching. I moved to DC. I taught third grade in Southeast DC in Marion Barry's old ward at King Elementary School. There were days I was a great teacher. There were days I was an okay teacher. There were days when it was very clear I was brand new. But all of those days, I think, for me, culminated in the solidifying of my commitment to my people and marginalized communities. It humbled me, right, to recognize how much skill I needed to build, how much understanding I needed to build, how many relationships I needed to build, to really cause the kind of positive effect that I want to.

It was just a reminder that none of us goes that alone. So I had to invest in my students, invest in their families. And when I was at my best, I know that young people not only reached hopefully some good academic outcomes, but also some good personal outcomes in terms of building their confidence and self-esteem, because I figured out how to build relationships with the people that matter most to them.

Luvvie: When you started teaching third grade, what do you think is the greatest lesson your students taught you?

Brittany: Sit down, be humble. Third grade, these are eight, nine-year-olds. On the one hand they still really... There's an age where you still really love school. You still really love your teacher, but it is also an age where things are becoming more difficult academically. So, for my teachers in the audience, you all know that third grade is the first year that you go from learning to read, right? So how do you sound out a word? What do different letters sound like together? How do you become more fluent as a reader?

Third grade is the year that you begin to read, to learn. And so, it's all about comprehension and being able to summarize things, being able to foreshadow, all of those skills that you and I use now, Luvvie, as writers, those start to really be honed in the third grade. And so, what that means is there is an additional maturity that third graders have to have. There's more homework. There's more comprehensive work. There's much more critical thinking. You're asking eight and nine-year olds to grow up a little bit. And sometimes there's some real resistance to that. And anybody who has

children, has taught children, loves children, babies has children, got a godchild, you all know, children will humble you.

Luvvie: They will try you.

Brittany: It does not matter how credentialed you are. It does not matter how energetic you are. They will make you remember that you've got a lot of work to do. I just think that I walked in with a lot of assumptions about my own capabilities, and it was like, "No. You've got to put in your time and do your work in order to get the results that you want."

Luvvie: Real stuff. What happened, because, basically, there was a life-shifting moment, I think, in your career, right, around Ferguson?

Brittany: Yeah.

Luvvie: Tell me what happened, how Ferguson... Well, I mean, we all know... So Mike Brown got killed in Ferguson, and the uprising that happened there, I feel like was culture-shifting, and you happen to be one of the people who was deeply entrenched in it. So tell me how that whole thing happened, how you got involved.

Brittany: That whole time is a real reminder for me constantly of both privilege and preparation. And I'll tell you what I mean. Like I said, I was raised in a tradition of social justice. My first protests I was like in a stroller. I've got very, very early memories of doing this kind of work. So existing outside of justice work was never really a choice I was going to make. That said, there are various moments in my life that prepared me, I think, to be able to be helpful during this time. And I say helpful because there is no single leader of this movement. There was no single leader of that uprising. You all know my name, but there are thousands of other people who were brilliant and have made incredible sacrifices and are so much of the reason why we were able to shift culture through the Ferguson uprising, whose names you don't know.

And so, I just want to honor and acknowledge that, and that's the privilege piece that I'll come to in a second. But I think that my preparation allowed me to be helpful in that moment because I understood the needs and wants and desires of young people and their parents, because I had been working in education for years. I had been building deep relationships with community and had returned home to St. Louis to do more of that work as a non-profit executive.

But also because of that job, I understood how power functioned in St Louis. So I understood who was making the money, who was donating the money, who was making the decisions, which decisions were being made publicly, which decisions were being made behind closed doors. And I had audience both with my neighbors and the

folks in the community at the grassroots, and I had audience with people at the grass tops and the power brokers and the deal makers.

And so, the preparation of my career and what all of those different kinds of relationships teach you, as well as just the technical expertise I had built up about young people. I've done a lot of policy work, all of that kind of stuff, it kind of congealed in that moment to prepare me to be a bridge, I think, between lots of different groups of people who, frankly, especially for folks with privilege, who were not used to hearing from our communities and needed fully to understand that they were levers to accomplish the vision of the people, instead of being the people to declare the vision themselves.

And so, trying to work with people of great privilege to step away from a tendency toward paternalism, and to step into being a community partner, is one of the functions that I really tried to help play there. Then I think the other thing was really making sure to amplify the voice of my people, of the protest community, of the movement community of young people who, not only were asking, "Could I be Mike Brown one day?" But were also having to mourn their friends, and colleagues, and classmates, over and over and over again.

A lot of people don't realize the St. Louis police killed nearly a dozen more Black men in the year after Michael Brown was killed.

Luvvie: Wow.

Brittany: From August 9th of 2014 to August 9th, 2015, these police in St. Louis kept this up. And we already know that the police across the country were still engaging in these kind of behaviors. And so, these young people were not just coming out every single day for Mike Brown. They were also coming out for Kajieme Powell and for Vonderrit Myers, and for Mansur Ball-Bey. And that's just in St. Louis. So the commitment of young people is something that I wanted to make sure that I matched, because if they could get out there and be courageous, then there's no excuse for me not to.

So it was certainly a transformative time in my career. I was out in the streets as often as I could be. But I was also engaging in quiet organizing, digital organizing. I ended up on the Ferguson Commission trying to bring the wants and hopes and ideas of the community to the forefront for St. Louis, and then joined President Obama's policing taskforce to try to do the same.

Luvvie: The Mike Brown shooting, I feel like, was culture shifting because of the fact that it brought this phenomenon to the street in a way that was accessible for people, in that people who had not realized it was an actual problem and were not willing to face it, finally had to face it. During the Ferguson uprising, what do you think that you came away with?

Brittany: I mean, I think, first of all, I came away with an elevated and evolved understanding of the discipline of social change, which so many people don't realize is that the Ferguson uprising is called that because it was not just one or two days of community frustration. It was 400 days of sustained, direct, disciplined social action. So it was shutting down malls on Black Friday. It was showing up at city council meetings. It was organizing meetings. It was feeding protesters who didn't have a place to go during the holidays.

There were so many people and groups and individuals that made sure that that kind of disciplined organizing was happening, and it required that everyone was attentive to one another, and then played their part. Instead of swerving into everybody's lane and trying to be the single voice upfront, it was about making sure that you bring the talents, gifts, resources, time, treasure, that you uniquely have to the table and saying, "How can this help move the ball down the field?"

And so, the discipline of organizing, the discipline of social change is something that I had understood in pieces, but then I understood much more deeply throughout those 400 days. I think people think you can just get a hashtag trending on Twitter and that's how you create change. That is a tool. That's not the work in and of itself. That's certainly not the wind, that we made a hashtag trend, if the police are still killing people, right?

Luvvie: Right.

Brittany: If Black people are still suffering, if marginalized people are still being oppressed, then the hashtag, the meeting, the photo op, none of that is the win. Making a demonstrable change in people's lives and ensuring that that change is institutionalized and lasting, that's the win. And that takes concerted, consistent effort over a long period of time. So, certainly, the Ferguson uprising helped confirm and evolve my understanding of philosophy around that.

I think, for the world, it reminded folks that the systems that people of color, marginalized people, Black people interact with all the time, are always interested in marginalizing us. That this is not about one police officer or a bad apple spoiling the bunch. What we are saying is that the bucket is rotten. The entire system is rotten. A system that was built on the policing of Black bodies through the enslavement of Africans here in America, that evolved into modern-day policing where, which is often about the protection of property and the policing of Black bodies once again, that those are things that are rooted deeply in systemic oppression and racism.

And so, it's not just about holding a single police officer accountable. It's about preventing the oppression and the tragedy in the first place because we've held this system accountable and we've never let the system off the hook. I think that a lot of people awakened to what the facts are around this. A lot of people awakened to the fact that it is much more broad and widespread than a single name, or a single hashtag,

or a single video. I think people woke up to the fact that we were never just talking about the police. We are talking about all systems that do not do right by marginalized people in this country. We were talking about the intersectional ways that people with multiple oppressed identities experienced these systems.

So we're not just talking about straight Black men. We're talking about queer Black folks. We're talking about disabled Black folks. We're talking about immigrant Black folks. We're talking about elderly Black folks. We're talking about young Black folks. We're talking about all Black people and ensuring that the motto for freedom and liberation that we desire is something that benefits all people. I think that people now are much more able to wrap their arms around that. The message hasn't penetrated everywhere. But I think many more people are able to articulate the interconnectedness of it all, and the systemic nature of it all than they were in 2014.

Luvvie: I remember being on Twitter... I mean, I've been on Twitter since 2008. 2014 was such a shift in how Twitter even activates the world. I think it was one of the first times that we really saw the power of Twitter to amplify social movements in key ways. And this is kind of when your name rose up a little bit. How do you see that moment acutely changing your life?

Brittany: This is to the privilege point I was making earlier, certainly had a lot of preparation. But I also have a lot of privilege. I have been secure in my financial status for pretty much as long as I can remember. I've got an advanced degree and a great college education. I speak the King's English in a way that mainstream audiences find palatable. I am thin. I'm certainly a Black woman, and a brown skin Black woman at that, but have the ability to navigate certain social spaces that are unfortunately and wrongly closed off to so many other Black folks.

I certainly would like to believe that I was saying something that people wanted to hear, and that people needed to hear. But I also know that part of people's ability to hear it from me has to do with my privileges. And I think that I've been trying consistently to do better and better to become a person who understands that, and operates with that understanding. Sometimes, yes, it's my voice that I need to share, and sometimes it's actually about me moving myself out of the way and making sure that I'm making room and passing the mic for voices that other folks won't hear from unless I'm the one who invites them in.

I think all the time about this concept of spending our privilege, that my friend Rebecca Cokley, who's a disability activist kind of introduced me to. Audre Lorde says it another way, this has been one of my favorite quotes since high school. She says, "To absorb without use is the gravest error of privilege." I think it's a mistake for us to think that it's only White people who have privilege, or only men who have privilege, or only straight people who have privilege, or only CIS people who have privilege.

If we've got breath in our lungs, then we have the privilege of life to be able to make room for somebody else. There is an opportunity that is constantly before me to think intentionally about how I turn the opportunities that are given to me into opportunities for other people. How do I put money in other people's pocket? How do I make sure that they can build skill? How do I make sure that they can increase their network? How do I make sure that they gain access to the decision-making tables that I have access to?

It's not just about getting my seat at the table. It's about dragging in 10 other people with me to take over the table. And it's about building our own table. And I think that the ways really that my life changed were not just that more people knew my name or not just that I had more opportunities coming my way, but that I really solidified my own understanding and my own personal value around way-making for other people.

And so, I constantly try to hold myself accountable to that. You're one of those folks that we have these conversations all the time, because it's important to me that my network and my friend group holds me accountable to that as well.

Luvvie: I want you to repeat that Audre Lorde quote.

Brittany: Yes. She said, "To absorb without use is the gravest error of privilege. To absorb without use is the gravest error of privilege." She said this in 1989 during her college commencement address at Oberlin College. So thinking about who she's talking to. She's talking to a pretty White audience. She's talking to an educationally privileged audience. She's talking to at least a subset of people who have wealth and generational wealth. I mean, these are folks that have privilege in so many different ways and at so many different layers. People with religious privilege, people with able-bodied and able-minded privilege.

There are just so many layers with which we need to think critically about the privilege that we hold and be really, really intentional to spend it. I read that quote for the first time my senior year of high school and I have never ever let it go.

Luvvie: I heard the phrase "spend your privilege" from you. And you're saying you learned it from who?

Brittany: I learned it from Rebecca Cokley.

Luvvie: Rebecca Cokley.

Brittany: She works at the Center for American Progress. She is a person who identifies as having a disability and is a disability rights activist. I've learned so much from her and Black disabled women like Melissa Thompson. When we were first talking about it, I was like, "I'm going to use that." She was like, "Use it. Spread it far and wide."

Luvvie: And because of that, I've spread it far and wide too because I usually do... One of my signature talks is one where I talk about speaking truth to power. And I think one of the biggest and easiest, even, well, most accessible ways we can use privilege is by speaking truth, especially for people who might not have the privilege we have. And the moment I heard "spend your privilege" from you, I use that in rooms, and I say, "This is a really good way to think about it, about when we're using our power because privilege sounds like accusatory sometimes, but it's really not. It is a thing.

We're all privileged in certain ways. Well, not all of us, but unless you are... You might be privileged in one way, even though you're marginalized in 10. Those of us who belong into the more privileged groups than not more marginalized ones, we should absolutely use our privilege in that way. It was a game-changing concept to think about because we already know it as "lift as you climb". But to say spend it means, you know what? I understand, I have it. I need to give it to you because you don't have enough.

Brittany: Yes. Precisely. And that it can be a powerful tool in undoing oppressive forces. To your point, this is the power of the multiplier effect. I heard it from Rebecca. I shared it. You heard it for me, you shared it. I think we spend a lot of time on ownership of the wrong things. Now, let me be very clear. Secure your bag, own your property, build generational wealth. But also, how are we thinking about ownership in a communal way? How are we thinking about the collectives of our block, our street, our neighborhood, our people, in terms of what we collectively own?

It is certainly intellectual property. Black people own a lot of the intellectual property that has created and perpetuated dope culture in the United States, for example. It is our music. It is our styles of dressing. It is the lack of resources that so many of us have experienced that led us to be more creative, and we set trends nationwide, worldwide. We own that collectively, and it is important that we acknowledge where things come from.

It's important that people know that Tarana was talking about MeToo far before Alyssa Milano was. That matters, but it also matters how we own things collectively. And I think the thing that I'm really obsessed with right now is this idea of collective ownership. What would it look like for us to buy back our Black? And it's not about making one person wealthy, but it's about making sure that every person that lives in a house owns the house that they live in, and that every person that lives in that house is coming to the community meetings to figure out everything from education, to the library system, to community security, so that we're not dependent on a police system that does not work for us.

That's the kind of bold, imaginative vision that I think we're capable of. But it's like we can get really caught up on like, well, I said that first, or this is my phrase, or this is my quote. And it matters to acknowledge where things come from, but not to the point where we're not intentional about empowering people with the tools that we've got

and sharing them widely. Like I always say that my purpose is to speak and teach truth that moves people to action. I don't care if you follow me on Twitter. I don't care if you buy my book. I don't care if you follow me on Instagram. What I care about is that you take the right mindsets and the right skills to go and change the world however you can. And that's the multiplier effect that I'm dependent on.

Luvvie: I think there's something really important there. I recently read something about how they're saying that the state of America is how it is because people cannot think collectively because they're still struggling to survive. So when people are struggling to survive, it's hard to look at your next-door neighbor and say, "How can I help you?" when you feel like you're drowning.

Brittany: That's right. That's right.

Luvvie: So how can we start pulling some of the people out of the water who are drowning, and how can we start thinking as that collective?

Brittany: That's such a fantastic question. I think the first thing is really to have a paradigm shift. The paradigm shift I think happens in two ways. One is about getting rid of this idea of scarcity, that there are Western models and ways of being, capitalism, the way that we work, the number of days that we work, the sense of urgency, the sense of individualism. These are Western ideals, and they have led us, these elements of dominant culture have led us to think that there is a scarce amount of pie, and that they're going to slice up the pie for everybody else. And once you get your piece of pie, you've got to hold onto it for dear life and hoard it instead of share it.

The truth of the matter is we truly do, in a material sense, live in a world of abundance. So we can in so many ways bake more pie instead of fight each other over the pie that we're all trying to hoard. And so, I think that the first thing we have to do is get out of this scarcity mindset and move toward an abundant mindset, rather, individually and collectively. I also think, especially for marginalized people across the world, we have to recognize that we are literally stronger together, right?

Luvvie: Yes.

Brittany: I mean, I never use the word minority because people of color are the global majority. It is a Western idea that we measure everything up against Whiteness even though Whiteness is not the default around the world. And so, we have been set up to fight each other over scraps while folks who benefit from White supremacy feast in the other room. And instead of fighting each other, and I'm not suggesting fighting the people in the other room, I'm suggesting that all of us take issue with the fact that there's glass in between us in the first place, and take issue with the fact that we've been served up something completely different.

And so, I think that if we recognize the power that we have in numbers and intellect and creativity, and stop creating divisions among people where they don't exist, like this whole thing about Black immigrant folks versus Black American folks, I understand that there are cultural differences. I also understand that there are things that deserve to be addressed and need to be healed. But what that doesn't mean is that once those things are healed, and the apologies are made, and we're starting to listen to each other and understand each other better, that we keep holding onto our piece of the pie because we just want to hoard it.

It means that we actually begin to figure out how we work together to make sure that the needs of all of us are addressed in a really sufficient and intersectional way. So I think that that's the first thing. And then, I think the second thing is, as we are building solutions, we need to be paying attention dually to people's immediate needs and people's long-term imagination.

When I was a teacher, I figured out very quickly that the greatest theft of oppression is that it robs you of your imagination, that it's hard to imagine what's possible, what you can achieve. It's hard to think that something across the river is even accessible to you because you are focused, like you said, on survival. You are focused on making it to the next paycheck. You are focused on making sure that the bills get paid. You are focused on getting to whatever next step there is so that you can survive, so that your family can survive.

When you're caught up in that survival space, you don't have the time, or the capacity, or the energy to imagine what can be and then to set up a plan to get there. And so, I think that, to your point about pulling folks out of the water, it's about making sure that we have immediate solutions now. People have immediate needs around housing, around their wages, around food scarcity, around the education of their children, around the literal clothes on their back. And we have to be intentional about creating system, alternative systems, for people to access their immediate needs.

And at the same time, we need to be imaginative. We need to think about the world that we want and not just continue to survive in the world as it is. So, in the space of policing, at [Campaign Zero](#), we built a 10-point policy platform to end police violence because we believe we can live in a world where the police don't kill people. And so, what that means in an immediate sense are those accountability measures, building citizen review boards that actually have citizens on them that can subpoena officers, changing state laws and statutes that allow officers to see the evidence that is being used against them before they go into court. Those are the immediate things that keep people safer now.

But that doesn't get the number to zero. Right now the number annually is somewhere around a thousand or 1,100 people that the police kill every year. To get the number to zero, we truly have to imagine what's possible and build a plan to get there. Now people

look at us all the time and they're like, "The police are always going to kill somebody." And I'm like, "No, we didn't call it Campaign Fewer or Campaign Half-

Luvvie: [Campaign Zero](#).

Brittany: ... we called it a [Campaign Zero](#) because we have to be bold enough to imagine what's possible so that we can be inspired to do the work to get us there.

Luvvie: That's real, and this work is not easy. This is laborious. This is sometimes traumatizing, and you are surrounded by love. I actually wanted to talk about that because I think it really, really is an important part, and it's a new part in both of our lives. We both got married a month apart.

Brittany: A month apart.

Luvvie: Actually, two weeks apart.

Brittany: A month apart and I was at yours taking notes and then you were at mine dancing to your Afro beats and whatnot in your flats that you changed into.

Luvvie: Because I learned that lesson. Yo, I learned that lesson. We literally got-

Brittany: Girl, I wore flats under my wedding dress. I was like, "I'm not playing these games with you all. No." We had a whole second line. I was like, "I'm not doing this in the streets of the Bywater with some high heels on. We're not even playing these games. I'm 35 years old. These flats are getting worn."

Luvvie: Look, I actually walked down the aisle in flats, okay? People couldn't tell.

Brittany: Listen-

Luvvie: Yes. I walked down the aisle in flats.

Brittany: You can't tell. It's a long dress.

Luvvie: It's a long dress.

Brittany: Nobody is looking.

Luvvie: Nobody knows. I was like, "Nobody needs to be standing up there 45 minutes in these stiletto heels. We ain't got time for it. So what has Black love done for you?"

Brittany: Oh my gosh. It has done everything. I don't just mean romantic love. One of the things that is challenging about being visible, especially as an activist, is that there's sometimes

a spoken, sometimes an unspoken expectation that I've got it all together, and I've got all of the elements of this thing figured out. Look, I'm learning as I go just like everybody else. Anybody who has changed the world ended up differently than they started out.

Luvvie: Amen.

Brittany: I say all the time that I'm learning in public, so I have made very public missteps. I have made very public mistakes. I have spoken up when I should have listened more. I have inserted myself in the conversations that I should have let people have, you know what I'm saying? I have used the wrong word. I have used the wrong phrase. I have used the thing that's not politically correct or respectful to the disenfranchised community that I'm talking about. And I've learned a lot of these things in public, and it has been the love of friends or strangers on the internet who say, "I understand where you're coming from. Let's have a dialogue about this, even though you hurt me." Or even if those folks hurt me, let's have a conversation about this.

I don't blame anybody who doesn't ever accept an apology that I give, or doesn't ever want to reach out if they feel like I've wronged them in some way. But it is to say that I learn and grow so much when we extend love and grace to one another in the same way that we want it extended to us. And so, most certainly Black love has been important to me in that way, that there have been people who have held space for me to be able to learn and grow, without holding me to an impossible standard, but still holding me accountable to who I say I want to be. That balance is the stuff of love. That balance of honesty and care is the stuff of love.

But also, certainly romantic love has been really important in this journey of my life, in this era of my life. You can probably hear me smiling right now as I'm talking about it. I'm like four months married almost to the day. And our wedding was lit and full of Black love. We had it in this place called Studio BE in New Orleans. For folks who don't know it, you need to go there when you visit New Orleans.

Whenever you all go to Essence, make sure you go to Studio BE because it is just filled with Black joy, and Black art, and the Black story in a way that we wanted to surround ourselves with as we pledged ourselves to one another in front of God and our loved ones. And so, it was really impactful to us for people to be able to experience that, to be able to feel full up on love and joy during that weekend. And I feel like-

Luvvie: And it was amazing.

Brittany: Thanks. I feel like we did our wedding right because I hear about people who met at the wedding who are now hanging out.

Luvvie: Same.

Brittany: People who are doing work together, they're hanging out. They are following each other on social media and big-upping each other in the comments. That means to me that there was so much love in the space that there was love leftover for everybody to shower on each other. And that's exactly what we wanted to happen. Reggie, my husband, is just so patient, and thoughtful, and encouraging, and supportive. He's an incredible accountability partner. He helps me remember that I am capable of being who I say I want to be, and that I deserve to be confident in that person.

We pray together. We laugh so much. I think I figured out he was my person when I realized I felt... The day that I realized he was my person was the day I realized how much energy I had in his presence because I wasn't draining myself by showing up as somebody else. And I didn't realize how much I was doing that in previous relationships until I didn't have to do that in this one. When I was like, "Oh, I'm so relaxed," and I've got so much time and energy to give to this thing because I'm not worried about what I'm wearing, what I'm saying, if I'm saying too much, if I'm saying too little, if I'm showing up in the right way, I'm just showing up as me.

This person doesn't tolerate me, he loves me and accepts me, and is excited by me, and is learning things for me just like I'm learning things from him. And that, for me, was the aha moment that like, "Oh, this is the kind of love that my parents wanted for me. This is the kind of love that God talks about. This is the kind of love that every person deserves to have in their life, a love that affirms who you are and is excited to watch you and push you to continue to grow into who you want to be.

Luvvie: Ooh, that's real. Mine is actually the opposite. I knew he was my person when I realized I didn't have to be hyper energetic in his presence because I could actually rest. I was like, "I can actually breathe and just be without having to perform." So I was like-

Brittany: Yeah, no, we're saying the same thing. I had energy not feeling like I had to be on all the time, but rather feeling like I had energy to give this thing because I wasn't giving my energy to showing up as somebody else. Yeah. We're saying the exact same thing.

Luvvie: And you know what? I feel like we both married almost the same person.

Brittany: It's like, "This is a safe space." We totally did. They look the same. They're both beard gang.

Luvvie: Even their wedding bands-

Brittany: They're like the same complexion.

Luvvie: Even their wedding bands are similar. I was like, "How are you all wedding bands band with the stones in the middle?" I said, "Stop it." I have a picture of them two-

Brittany: We went to the store and I was like, "Okay, well, show me the style of what you want and I'll pick something." And I thought he wanted something that was really simple because that's what we had talked about over the years. And he was like, "Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Maybe I want some bling too." And sure enough, this man went straight for the chocolate diamonds. I was like, "Oh okay. Excuse me. I see somebody's got expensive taste."

Luvvie: Dead ass. I was like, "Wait a minute, when'd you get this fancy? You've got champagne diamonds on your ring?"

Brittany: Listen. What in the world?

Luvvie: You know what? They did good with our rings, so they was like, "You know what? We're not going to have you all out here just popping too... You know what I mean?"

Brittany: Right.

Luvvie: We've got to do something.

Brittany: I'm just trying to match your swag. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Luvvie: He literally was like, "I can't be out here like a little peasant." I was like, "Bruh, you're ridiculous." You all wedding being two weeks after ours was perfect because it was actually the first time we left the house after the wedding, was coming to yours.

Brittany: Oh, I love it. I'm so honored that you all came to be with us, because I know you all were probably like... The thing about weddings are they are so fun and you are so overwhelmed by love, but they are exhausting and expensive.

Luvvie: Ma'am. Ma'am.

Brittany: Although, please, never ever go into debt for your wedding. Never, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever. The people who love you will love you at whatever budget you got, and that's what-

Luvvie: That's real stuff, B, that's real stuff.

Brittany: ... you need to remember stuff.

Luvvie: Weddings are expensive. Jesus Christ, I was like, "Ooh, Lord.

Brittany: Ooh, geez.

Luvvie: But we made it. We made it without debt.

Brittany: We made it. Hallelu. We made it. Everything's paid off, praise the Lord.

Luvvie: Praise the Lord. The Lord is good all the time. I had an amazing time-

Brittany: All the time.

Luvvie: ... and the love was really apparent, and the intentionality was there. Folks was in tears and stuff. That's a good wedding. Folks was tired the next day. A good wedding is when-

Brittany: Tired.

Luvvie: ... people are tired, when you're just like, "I can't."

Brittany: Exhausted.

Luvvie: I need a break because it was too lit, too lit. What are you most excited about right now, in terms of in your life, personally or professionally?

Brittany: Yeah. I'm excited to finish my first book because this process is beautiful and taxing.

Luvvie: Yes. Book-writing is a whole deal.

Brittany: Yeah. We're going to release it early next year. So, writing this thing from start to finish has certainly been a journey. I've discovered a lot about myself, a lot about what I need to really be disciplined. And so, I'm excited to put the final period on the last page and really get moving with that. I'm excited to build my life with my husband. I feel really grateful, not only to have found my person, but to have found somebody who I want to build with and who wants to build with me. I'm excited because if two are better than one, then I'm hype about what we can do together that we can't do apart. And I don't know what that is yet, but I'm excited to be on the journey of discovering it.

I'm excited to do more in the media space. I've been in education for over 10 years, more like 13 years. And because I feel like, after a lot of prayer and reflection, that my purpose is speaking and teaching street that moves people to action, I've been thinking really intentionally about how I streamline that. How do I make it accessible and how do I make it sustainable for me? It can't be that I'm gone every week. It can't be that I'm gone every day to another state, another country, leading another workshop, or doing another keynote. That stuff is great and I love doing it, but it can't be my life every day, especially now that I'm married. But even if I were single, it couldn't be my life every day because it's just not sustainable.

So I'm really trying to be creative and get with other creative folks about how to inform and activate people in a way that makes them feel encouraged, excited, engaged, empowered, so that, again, that multiplier effect takes hold and they then take what

they learn and go and do something with it through creative media outlets. The NBC News and MSNBC new gig is one of the ways that I'm excited to learn how to do that even better and communicate to more people and amplify the voices of people that so often go unheard in these cable news spaces, and stand alongside so many other great commentators that are doing that.

And we keep on keeping on with [Pod Save The People](#). We're grateful to everybody who tunes in every Tuesday. And so, yeah, I'm excited to get more into this space and figure out exactly how I can be of help and provide content that is really of consequence for people.

Luvvie: That is awesome because, yeah, we can't be gallivanting. Also, we 35 and we old. We're young old, okay? We are young old in these streets. And we don't know how washed-

Brittany: I got no problem being washed. I already told you. Washed is a privilege, a privilege I will happily take.

Luvvie: Washed is a privilege, okay? Why are we leaving the house?

Brittany: My furniture is nice because I'm old enough to make a little money to buy a nice couch instead of the used couch. Thank the Lord. I'm grateful for the used couch that I had, but I'm grateful for this couch that I got, and I feel good sitting on it at the end of the day. I ain't got no problem being washed. I'm fine with it. I'm grateful I can be.

Luvvie: Lord, these monthly massages are important to my spirit. Okay.

Brittany: Listen. Listen.

Luvvie: What is your self-care routine? How are you taking care of yourself in the midst of all of this?

Brittany: By having boundaries, man. The older I get, the more I realize that self-care is not just about a particular item or a thing that you do. Sometimes it is. Like I get my nails done every two weeks, which means I can't be on the phone with you. I can't be texting because somebody has my hands and they're trying to make them pretty. So there's only so much I could do. So that's certainly part of the self-care package for me.

But I saw someone once say that real self-care is curating a life that you don't have to constantly escape from. And my boundaries help me do that. So it's having a bedtime. It's my agents and the folks that I work with on my team knowing which hours not to schedule, which days I'm not going to travel, the amount of days I'm willing to be gone during a month, and the amount of days I have to be at home during a month. It is setting my phone to Do Not Disturb at 11 o'clock because I love you all, but unless it's an

emergency, we can talk about it in the morning. And if it is an emergency, you'll call me back twice and the phone will ring.

But I have set much more clear boundaries for myself, and it takes practice to hold onto them. The people that love me help me hold onto those boundaries. My assistant is also my god-sister, Tabitha, and she's incredible. She was in the wedding, but she's the person who'll be like, "Okay, so I just scheduled all this stuff, but I'm not going to schedule any of this stuff for the next week until we talk about the fact that you have given away this many hours and that's not going to work. So what are we going to do to adjust?"

I really appreciate her being forthright with me about that because we don't just work together for you to handle my calendar, we work together. And I chose you and you said you wanted to do this in part so that we could both be well. So yeah, it's boundaries, boundaries on my self-care and not apologizing for them. But knowing that if people love me, they will understand and respect those boundaries.

Luvvie: Ooh, that's real. And then you get your nails done every two weeks.

Brittany: Yes, every two weeks. My person is always trying to like put some rhinestones and stuff on me, but I really like geometric shapes. And so, going through the exercise of getting on Instagram and being like, "Ooh, which design do I want this week?" It's a fun little exercise that I can do to take my mind off of the hellscape we are all currently living in and spend that hour and a half just zoning out and letting somebody take care of me.

Luvvie: How do you spoil yourself?

Brittany: By buying too many clothes.

Luvvie: Girl, I love clothes.

Brittany: I'm a shopaholic, which is the problem. I'm actually on a spending fast this month because I'm just like, I just don't ever want it to get out of control. So before it gets out of control, let me remind myself that I can control it. So I'm on a spending fast right now. But yeah, I love fashion. I love how you can express yourself with it. I love that you can make powerful political statements with it.

I recently just bought a bunch of pins on [Radical Dreams pins](#) because I'm like, "Now that I'm doing TV more often, when you see me, I want you to see Shirley Chisholm's face or Marsha P. Johnson's face, or Maxine Waters face on my lapel. So I love what fashion can do and how it can function as revolution. And so, for me, certainly, it's about looking good and feeling good, but it is also about how much I can express my confidence, and my confidence, and my authenticity as a Black woman. Reggie's going to listen to this and be like, "That's just justification so you could keep going shopping."

Luvvie: I can see his side eye right now. He's going to be like, "Yeah, all right."

Brittany: Right. But I did post-debate coverage after the New Hampshire debates, right ahead of their primary for MSNBC on All In With Chris Hayes, and I wore a red pant suit with a black and white tie.

Luvvie: Which I loved. That was a whole outfit.

Brittany: So I stole Reggie's tie, thank you.

Luvvie: In fact, yes.

Brittany: But everybody was like... Exactly, but you get it. It was like, A, I feel good in this and I want to feel good when I'm on your TV screens and hopefully giving you information that is helpful and useful to you. But also, I want to be able to silently express that the days of Black women being quiet in ways that make you comfortable are over. And so, if this red suit is going to help you do that, if these lapel pins are going to help you do that, if this woman in a tie are going to help you do that, then that's the message that I want you to get.

I want you to understand that there are people who are interested in politics and in the wellbeing of this, every single person in this country, who are not going to be the same people who always wear a gray or black suit. If that's you, great. But for the rest of us, we want to see ourselves reflected in all of the ways that we can. So you all going to get this red suit today with this tie. I'm going to ask you to think about everything from gender, to color, and how you are supposed to show up versus how I am willing to show up while you're also listening to me spit these facts about marginalized voters in Florida.

I really love fashion, so my vice sometimes, but usually my self-care, is spending a little time in thinking about how I want to present myself, and having a lot of fun with that, and remembering that if I show up as my full self, I give other people permission to do the same.

Luvvie: Yes. You are the second person to come on this show to talk about how wearing a red suit was a political statement. [Darnell Moore was the other one](#). A good red suit.

Brittany: Yes, oh, we love Darnell.

Luvvie: People cannot-

Brittany: A good red suit can change the game.

Luvvie: First of all, nobody can ignore you in the room even if they tried, okay? They'll be like I-

Brittany: Even if they even try.

Luvvie: Even if they try.

Brittany: Just try, I dare you.

Luvvie: Just try it if you want to. I dare, you're going to see me in this red suit.

Brittany: Listen. Listen.

Luvvie: Twizzler game popping. No, the outfit, I literally was like, "I want that suit." I think I have a suit that's red. I do.

Brittany: See, there you go.

Luvvie: I definitely have three red suits. I need to wear them soon. I wore one last year, Essence Black Women in Hollywood. It's just a fire red suit.

Brittany: It's time to break out another one. It's time to break out another red suit.

Luvvie: It's time to break out the other one. I was like, "How many red suits is too many because..."

Brittany: I don't think there are too many red suits, because you got a skirt red suit, and you got a wide leg pant suit, and you got a boot cut pant suit, and you got a crop leg pant suit. I have one with the crop jacket and a wide leg pant. I need to break that out soon.

Luvvie: I need a double-breasted one to really change the game, you know what I mean?

Brittany: Ooh, yeah, yeah. That would be a game changer.

Luvvie: Game changer.

Brittany: That would be a game changer. Listen, I'm just like, "Let's break these conventions that we didn't create for ourselves in the first place." Why am I going to abide by conventions that don't serve me? Why am I going to abide by traditions that don't serve me? I look good in red. You telling me to wear brown and black on TV does not serve me, so that's not what we're going to do. I want people to see a Black girl in a red suit and remind them that they can be whomever they are all the time, and that they are allowed to be, and that that is a necessary revolution even if it's a quiet one.

Luvvie: Yes, and that's why I love seeing you and Symone. Like Symone gets on TV, this bald Black woman whose nails are like five inches long and who gives you a whole texture

and a print on CNN. Everybody else wearing a blue suit looking boring. And here goes Symone changing the screen the moment she comes on.

Brittany: You're going to get it. That's what I'm saying, Symone, Angela, Tiffany, Zerlina, Joy, Black women in particular, I mean, we always have to be thoughtful. The world has trained us to be thoughtful about every aspect of our presentation, from what we wear, to how our hair is, to what our nails look like, to how we speak, to what we talk about. I think that what we are doing is reclaiming our own power and reclaiming the power of that well-trained eye to say, "I'm going to use the intentionality I have about everything to overturn your conventions and to challenge your traditions."

Luvvie: Come on. That's it. Drop the mic. We don't even have to say nothing else. That's how you end an interview. I already knew. First of all, I'm going to have a hard time picking what quotes I want to pull out because this whole interview has been nothing but gems, just sprinkling diamonds.

Brittany: I appreciate that. You know, it's always good to talk to the fam. These are when we have these real conversations. So thanks for having me on. I'm excited to keep listening because I've been a subscriber since day one, so I'm team Rants and Randomness.

Luvvie: Yes.

Brittany: I'm team Jesus and Jollof, especially since you gave me my first bowl of Jollof. I'm all in.

Luvvie: On my couch. On my couch.

Brittany: That's right. That's right, in the CHI.

Luvvie: In the CHI.

Brittany: So no, I'm grateful for all of the work that you're doing in the platform that you're building for us.

Luvvie: And I'm grateful for your existence. I'm grateful for pushing us to be better than we used to be, more thoughtful. And always cheer you on. I'm excited for your book to come out. I'm also writing book two, so we in the same struggle right now, It's real, okay?

Brittany: Thanks for all those, "How's your writing going" texts, because I'll be like, "Oh yeah, I need to do that today." I appreciate it.

Luvvie: Yo, we are in this together, and it is one of the joys of my life to be able to glow up and go through life's journeys with amazing people who I can always tap on. And you are definitely a valued member of my village.

Brittany: Well, the feeling is very mutual and I appreciate it.

Luvvie: Yes, indeed. Boo, we shall be chatting later.

Brittany: All right. Talk to you soon. Thanks, you all.

Luvvie: Bye.

Oh my gosh. Brittany is one of the most brilliant people I know. Shout out to her for joining me for this interview on Rants and Randomness. It's been much overdue and y'all, you want to follow Brittany Packnet Cunningham on social media. She's owning the space. She makes you think different. She teaches, she is a joy to follow and her username is @mspackyetti, that's M-S-P-A-C-K-Y-E-T-T-I on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#). Follow Brittany.

And please make sure you check out [Hair Love](#) on YouTube, and [She Did That](#) on Netflix and the [piece in New York Times](#) and hit me on social media to let me know what you think.

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