



Rants and Randomness with Luvvie Ajayi

Save Edges (with Felicia Leatherwood) - Episode 14

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My peoples, welcome to Rants and Randomness. I'm Luvvie Ajayi, the wacky wordsmith, and this is my show where I'm talking about all things I'm loving, things I'm side eyeing and having great conversation with really dope people. I'm here at Chicago Recording Company, bringing you all the radio voice.

On this episode, I'm talking about my feel good of Andrew Gillum's win in Florida. I'm ranting about all these trendy foods and why I'm not here for them, and spotlighting Dream Village. My guest is the incredible Felicia Leatherwood, celebrity hairstylist and a great friend of mine.

So, I am looking forward to it. Let's jump into it.

Feel Good

[00:00:41]

All right. So, this week's feel good for me is Andrew Gillum's win in Florida. He's the mayor of Tallahassee, and he pulled off a major upset to become the democratic nominee for Florida's governor. It was a close race, but he won. The win makes him the first black gubernatorial candidate ever for Florida, which is a shame because how? But I know how, because Florida, and because the United States. And he did it by spending just \$4 million. His opponents together spent 90 million, basically David beat Goliath. And I could not be more thrilled about it. He's a progressive pusher for things like the \$15 minimum wage, and Medicare for all. And it's just shows how important it is for us to go out to vote, because he won by a small margin. Every vote definitely count.

So, I just think back to the fact that there's a blue wave coming. All these black folks running for governor, and basically competing in a way that shows we are here, we want to make change like Stacey Abrams in Georgia. Well, and then brown folks too, like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez in New York are showing that there's a growing demand and momentum around real progressive candidates. It's time for the old guard to be voted out. Voted out. And in November, we want all of Florida, every progressive person in Florida who can vote to go out to vote because Andrew Gillum as governor of Florida could change some things. His opponent is some dude endorsed by Trump. I ain't even going to say his name. So, you know that dude is not going to be about this life. He's definitely going to try to get us back into Handmaid's Tale.

So we want Andrew to win. So, let's get out and vote. And keep in mind Gillum is running in Florida you all. You cannot take for granted your vote, especially in that state that is considered a purple state sometimes in midterms. We could actually get this man in office. So, andrewgillum.com that's A-N-D-R-

E-W-G-I-L-L-U-M.com. You can go find out information on how to donate to his campaign, volunteer, and just make sure you are part of this push to get good people into office, and get the clowns out of office. All right. But I'm feeling good. I'm encouraged by the fact that he's one step closer to being Governor of Florida. All right?

Rant

[00:03:11]

All right. So, my rant is about all of these trendy foods, especially kale. I'm not here for kale. I feel like kale tastes like dreams deferred. There was a point where kale was not this vegetable du jour, and it turns out that how kale became this big thing is the American Kale Association, which can you imagine? There's an American Kale Association. They hired a publicist to grow its brand. Vegetables have publicists now? Yes, they do you all. And she pitched the food to friends and former clients in the restaurant industry, and then all of a sudden it became the it vegetable. So, I decided, this is probably five, six years ago, I was like, "All right. Let me have this kale salad at this restaurant." It tasted like I was eating green sand. I was just like, "Why is this vegetable all hard to deal with, and super chewy and weird?" And folks were like, "You know what? It just wasn't prepared right."

And I went to another restaurant, and had something else that had kale and it tasted like disappointment and bad dreams. And I was like, "Okay, is it every restaurant that just hasn't figured out how to do kale?" And then folks like, "Well, maybe they're just not preparing it right. You're supposed to massage it." Here's the thing, if I have to massage my vegetable, I probably don't want to eat it. My vegetable is not going to the spa to be delicious. I would rather eat something else that I don't have to be all croon, and serenade for it to be delicious. Okay. I don't know what happened. All of a sudden kale became everywhere. Everyone was like, "Oh my God. It's just amazing. It's just the best thing ever." And I kept on giving it chances. Okay. I kept on giving it chances, but it did not work. And I am not here for kale apologists. All of you all, your ministry is not working.

Somebody once told me, "Kale ain't nothing but baby spinach with high blood pressure." Bruh, I cracked up. I'm just like, "I don't understand. I'm not buying into it." And it reminds me of La Croix. Is in La Croix or La Croix? I can never figure out how to pronounce that. That drink that everyone loves now, that's in every fridge and everyone's like, "Oh my God." My mom is obsessed with it. And every time I taste it, it just tastes like indecisiveness. It's like it can't ever decide on what flavor it wants to be. The thought of the La Croix, somebody thought about a flavor and was like, "Ooh, put it into a drink." What does it look like to think about a flavor, can't decide on it, and then make it to a drink? That is what La Croix is for me. I don't understand. Everyone's like, "Oh my God, I love it. The [pamplemousse](#) is my favorite flavor." And I try different flavors of it, and I'm always like, "This tastes like afterthought."

Literally, I don't understand. It's just water with a thought of sugar. If I want soda, I'm going to drink soda. If I want water, I'm going to drink water. Why do I have to get this middle ground, weird can of drink that can never decide what it wants to do. It's just so weird to me. I don't understand. I like my taste to be solid. I like to know what I'm eating or drinking. But La Croix, it's just an afterthought. It is an afterthought drink. You all are not going to convince me that it's delicious, and I'm probably pronouncing it wrong because disrespect, and yeah. No, no. I'm not here for it. I just really like solid

things. I don't really wear a lot of pastel because I like my colors to be solid. So, I like my sodas. I'm not going to drink La Croix because it tastes like if ginger ale went on a diet, and then got diluted by water, and then somebody then put it through a filter.

Yeah. So, no country for all these trendy foods. I will stick to my normals and I like my sugar to be plenty. My personal trainer, this is why he's also been looking for me because he's like, "Stop it, stop it." But, hey. So, no country for kale, no country for La Croix. Catch me eating spinach, and drinking Fanta. All right.

Randomness Spotlight

[00:07:24]

And I'm spotlighting [Dream Village](#). Dream Village is a coworking event and dreaming space created by my friend, [Eunique Jones Gibson](#). You might remember her. She was my first ever guest on this podcast. [If you haven't listened to that episode, you should](#). She's also the creator and founder of, [Because of Them We Can campaign](#). So, she created this thing in one year. I have to emphasize how impressed I am by that fact. So, Dream Village, she had this idea in August of 2017, to basically create a space where black people can go and see their dreams created, find community, and just have space to do the work that they need to do. And Eunique is seriously a visionary and realized that people needed that village, that circle of people to help you learn, to help you grow. And we're in a very special time for black creatives, where it's like another Renaissance of sorts. But where do we meet up? How do we find each other if we don't necessarily have the organic community?

So, she built Dream Village to be a member's only coworking space. Think about WeWork but for black folk. As a member, you get unlimited weekday access, unlimited weekend access. You get office amenities, you get printers, scanners, you get free Wi-Fi, and it's in Hyattsville, Maryland. I've been to Dream Village. It's a gorgeous space. I've spent 10 hours sitting there one day. I lost myself for 10 hours because it just feels comfortable. You want to get things done. There's a white board, and you can just meet up with your friends there and do good work. So, the cool thing is, Eunique decided that since Dream Village is a space that is just in Hyattsville, she wanted to take it on the road. So, she created Dream Village tour bus, that is literally a bus that she freaked out, that has a porch on it. She got a porch built on it you all, that basically it has chairs, it has computers, it has microwaves. And she wanted to bring this feeling to people across the country, and she did it.

I went to the launch. I spoke at the launch in DC, and it was so special. It was a day full of talks, and concrete takeaways from people who are doing good work, who've built businesses and empires and are giving back. And I moderated a panel on the village that had [Jeff Johnson](#), had [Brittany Packnett](#), [Wade the Barber](#) and her dad on this panel. It was so special, and I'm proud of my friend for creating something so amazing in the small time. It's only been 12 months. Dream Village is something incredible. So, the tour is hitting up five cities. Chicago, Atlanta, Madison, Wisconsin, LA. If you want to find out more about the tour, because the tour is free. She got the tour sponsored by Am Fam and the media partners OWN, because she wanted to make sure that we removed the barrier of access to people getting this information.

So, the tour's free. You can register, find out more information about it, dreamvillage.com. You can find out about the coworking space, you can find out about the bus, you can find out about the tour, and how you can join that community if you ever feel like you are lacking folks who push you to hustle. And if you're lacking people who are encouraging you to dream, or if you just need a space to go to spend your time to be productive, and work through your visions, it's a great place to do it. Don't be intimidated. Just go to the website. If you're in Hyattsville, Maryland or around there, you can be a member of the Dream Village. Eunique, shout out to you. Thank you for showing that our visions can become reality, and it doesn't have to be necessarily long-term. Thank you for putting work to all this stuff, and thank you for dedicating your life to making sure others are able to see their dreams come true. So, you all show some love to Dream Village. Check it out, and hopefully see you on the tour.

All right. So, people often ask me about my skincare regimen, the products I use. One of my favorite things in my routine right now is Black Girl Sunscreen. Before I put on any other products to enhance my Noir Pixie Dust, okay? My Noir Pixie Dust, I have to make sure that I'm going to be protected. So, I use Black Girl Sunscreen after I use my moisturizer because black can crack you all. So, this dope product helps me keep my skin right while I'm out in these streets soaking up the summertime sun and living my best life. It doesn't leave a white cast, it's super sheer. It's fragrance-free. It contains ingredients like a jojoba, cocoa, shea butter, the stuff we love. And it's just great for all skin types. So, I am a huge fan of Black Girl Sunscreen, and to protect your skin go to blackgirlsunscreen.com and use **rant25** for 25% off your first order. Got to protect this melanin you all. That's blackgirlsunscreen.com, and use the code **rant25** for 25% off.

Interview with Felicia Leatherwood

[00:13:02]

Luvvie: Oh my goodness. I am super excited for my next guest on Rants and Randomness. It's my friend and celebrity stylist, Felicia Leatherwood. Hey girl.

Felicia: Hey, how are you?

Luvvie: Good, good. I'm going to give people your official bio so they know how super legit you are. Felicia Leatherwood styles have been featured on such high-profile actors, Oscar award nominee, Ava DuVernay, Issa Rae of HBO's Insecure, megastar Will Smith, Grammy winner and R&B superstar, Jill Scott. I mean the list is long. Whether online or on Fox's hit show, The Real, or in person, Leatherwood's message is rooted in the idea of holistic health and fundamentally loving yourself. A true inside out approach to hair care. It is from these experiences that the idea of a specialized hair solution began to form. Felicia's work has been in a whole bunch of stuff. I'm talking Vogue, Variety, Essence, Elle, Ebony, more. She is just epic, and she happens to be one of my favorite people. Thank you for joining me.

Felicia: Oh man. Thank you for having me.

Luvvie: Oh my goodness. So, I always ask my guests, what did you want to do and be when you were growing up?

Felicia: I just knew I wanted to be successful, but I didn't know what that looked like. I wasn't the kid that loved going to school. I actually thought school at the time was taking up all my time of me creating, and I didn't even know what I was trying to create. I just felt like, "You know what, while I'm here I could be doing something else." So, it was weird because I wasn't the average, your typical teenager, or even before becoming a teenager, just young person. I was always trying to figure out how I could make money and what kind of business I could create.

Luvvie: So you knew you were going to be an entrepreneur? Did you know that?

Felicia: That's all knew. But I didn't know what it was going to be. I think before I used to doodle, I used to draw a lot. So, my friends and family thought, "Oh, maybe she'll be some kind of designer. She likes clothes. Maybe she'll be a fashion designer." So they put me in art school. But then it just didn't land after I was done with all my courses. I was like, "Yeah, I'm still not feeling it." But I always, always had a hobby of loving to do hair. So really, I didn't know at the time, but hair was going to be it.

Luvvie: Wait, when did you start doing hair? How old were you when you did somebody's hair for the first time?

Felicia: Oh my God. I was probably about 11 years old.

Luvvie: Really?

Felicia: My first client. Yes.

Luvvie: Who was it?

Felicia: Yeah. My first client was me and my mama. And then it just grew from there. Everybody in the neighborhood started coming and getting braids, and they want all these hairstyles because I became my own walking billboard. I marketed my own self. My hair texture was what they call 4C, kinky, curly. And no one understood that here. No one knew what to put on it, there weren't any products at that time for my texture. So, I was my own hair model. I used to do all these hairstyles and I would walk outside, see what the reaction would be and that's how I would get clients.

Luvvie: So, basically you were in your teens making all the coins?

Felicia: I was doing all right as a teenager. Yes.

Luvvie: And what made you really love doing hair? Why hair?

Felicia: Well, as you know me, I actually have had many careers. Hair was really just a hobby, but I ended up getting into production. I worked at BET from the age of 19 to about 24. And from BET, I worked at Virgin Records. I had a short career trying to produce different types of rappers and working in that department. And then I went on from there, I've worked at Fox, I've worked at Warner brothers, I worked at the Cartoon Network at one time, but it was production that I was doing. I would leave work, and actually go home and do hair. So, I was doing the most. I had

my corporate job by day, and then I was a hairstylist in-home by night. And I basically just got tired of being inside the building. I said, "I think I can do better. I want to work for myself. I don't want to punch a clock anymore. I don't want to sit in a cubicle. I just want to see if I can make it on my own." And it was scary, but I did it.

Luvvie: Was there ever a time when you were like, "You know what, this hair thing ain't going work," after you'd made that decision?

Felicia: Yes. There was a time where I got really nervous. And you know what? People tell you things. You have to be careful who you talk to. When I left corporate America to go to cosmetology school, I was older. I was 30, 31 and usually if you're going to be a hairstylist, you start young. You start in your teens. You start at 19, 20. So, I had a lot of people saying, "Wait a minute. So you're going to give up the 401K plan? You going to give up all these benefits to become a hairstylist? There's a hairstylist on every corner, what's going to make you different?" And at the time, I didn't know what was going to make me different, but I knew that I could be different. And I knew that natural hair was my thing.

So, my niche has always been natural hair, even before anyone was even thinking about bringing it back. Natural hair was always for me. So, I think that what I had to do was just really believe in myself, to be honest with you, because it was an extremely scary stepping out into that, without having any fall back. But I knew that once I did it, I would have to keep going. And there's no such thing as looking back. You just got to keep doing until you can't do it anymore. So, it was definitely scary, but at the same time, something about that adventure gave me an adrenaline rush. I wanted to prove to myself that I could be greater than I was at the time. So, I think that's what really propelled me to continue to work.

Luvvie: But how did you go from corporate, then getting all these famous clients? A lot of people don't see the connector of how do you go from the woman who's been doing hair for a long time, to have access to all these big names.

Felicia: There's a few levels to what that looks like. One, is that you have to be in the right place at the right time. And we don't know what the right place is. We don't always know. But I used to do, like a mantra, I used to say a lot of affirmations, I still do. And one of them was that I'm always in the right place at the right time, expecting great things to happen. And I would say that over and over, and I didn't know what was going to happen, but next thing I know, the boyfriend that I had whose mother didn't really like me, but she respected my work ethic. She loved that I was always at home hustling, doing hair. So, he would tell her. And she was going to a salon to get her hair done. And at that time, this was the salon to be at.

It was a premier salon in Hollywood, all the black Hollywood went to this salon. We had basketball players, football. We had barbers. So, we had people like Eddie Murphy coming in. We had a lot of people. And she told them about me. So, when I graduated I was able to go in there and do a trial run with them, and ended up just being the natural hairstylist there. Then next thing you know, it was like it rains, it pours. Jill Scott, I was doing [inaudible 00:21:18] at the time. There were so many people and honestly, I didn't even know everybody. I just knew I wanted to do hair.

- Luvvie: Wow. "She didn't even like me, but she respected my work." That right there is dope. It's like, "You ain't got to like me, but if my work is amazing, hey, you got to give certain props." So for natural hair, I love how you approach natural hair because it's more than just the thing that's sitting on top of our scalp. How do you encourage women about natural hair and what makes it such a caring point for you?
- Felicia: So, I think as I've traveled just in the world, even state to state, people tell you their stories. There's so many stories about how we've been treated with our skin color and our kinky hair. And those stories, because when you're a hairstylist, you basically are also a therapist. And when you hear all these stories about how people grew up and how they were mistreated based on their skin tone or their hair, it breaks your heart. And for me, it touched me in a way that drove me into saying, "I can do something. I can bring more love to this." And to create, loving your hair with natural care, was that, to bring more love to the women who wanted to understand what their texture is.
- And so, I did just travel and doing these workshops. Every time I would make a little money, I would put it back into my business, and I would travel. And I would do these workshops where I would educate the consumer, but I would also give them tools in which to take home and how to love themselves. How to look in the mirror and say, "I love you." A lot of people have a very difficult time looking into the eyes of another person, let alone themselves. So, we would do these exercises that would touch the women's lives so that it could bring them back to who they truly are past weaves, relaxers, everything. I had some women that were bleaching their skin, and we would just go through, and I would give them affirmations on how to love themselves. So, hearing all stories that women would tell me, that's what really touched me, because that's what broke my heart. And I was like, "I got to step away from behind the chair and bring this to the forefront."
- Luvvie: So, with all of those stories, what heartens you as you hear these stories, or in the work that you do? What makes you basically be like, "You know what? I'm going to keep doing this."
- Felicia: There's a feeling that you get when you're on the right track, and it's a really interesting feeling because it's hard to describe. It's something that drives you. You know you have to continue to do it, but you can't always explain to people why. But you wake up with the feeling, you have it, and as you're doing the mission you set out to do, there's a joy that comes about it. And you say, "Okay. I'm doing this thing that makes me feel good. I don't know why I feel this good, but it feels good, so that means I'm on the right track." So it was that feeling that kept me on the path of natural hair. There's a feeling, and I'm telling you, I don't even know how to describe this feeling, but it gives you hope and it makes you want to continue to do more work.
- Luvvie: Yeah. And your handle everywhere is **@lovingyourhair**. You all, Felicia has been doing my hair for probably eight years. When I had locks, she was one of only two people I let do my locks. When I sit in your chair and you're doing my hair, it feels like almost a mini spa day for me, because you bring love to the chair. Does that take a lot out of you?
- Felicia: That's a great question. I don't think anyone's ever cared and asked me that question. You know what, I got to be honest. In the beginning it did. It really did. There are a lot of people who have incredible energy, and as a hairstylist you would feel that. You would feel somebody's depression, or their sadness. You would feel it. You could feel it through the scalp, through the

hair. And I had a lot of hairstylists, and some other people that were really into mystical things say to me, "You got to be careful. Somebody's energy can jump on you," and all these things. "You got to protect yourself. Put these stones in your pocket, wear this necklace." I heard this a lot. And I would be really resistant because I would say to myself, "I feel like I'm called to do this work so I should already automatically be protected because this is what I do." I'm more powerful than the person sitting in the chair. So, if they're not in a good space, I can be in a great space for the both of us and maybe energy could jump on them instead of their energy jumping on me.

Luvvie: Yes. I love that.

Felicia: So, I basically visualized me being more of the powerful force that they needed to feel good, to feel beautiful and to feel love. And once I did that, that changed everything, Luvvie. Honestly, even the clientele I started to get started being more positive. People could come sit in my chair and have something go down that I would never know about, then I'd run into a friend of theirs later and they'd go, "Hey, did she tell you she lost her job?" I'm like, "No, we never talked about it. We had a wonderful session together of me doing her hair. We laughed. Maybe we drank a little wine, but she never mentioned to me that she lost her job." So, it started to change where people didn't want to bring me bad news, because usually when you go to get your hair done, folks sit up and they gossip, and they say negative things, but people don't do that with me. They don't do it.

Luvvie: Again, when you see Felicia, you are light. You cannot help but be like, "Yes. All the love, all the light." So it is one of those things where you do change people's moods with a great word. I've seen it happen where people sit in your chair, they might've been mad when they walked in, but then next thing you know, they're cackling. So it's a gift. It is a gift. And in that gift, what brings you the most joy still?

Felicia: Ooh. So I really, really get pleasure out of, and I think Issa Rae has spoiled me a little bit, when I do a hairstyle on someone and they look in the mirror, and you see their face, their eyes light up, or they say, "This is perfect. This is exactly what I wanted." That is what keeps me going. I'm like, "Okay. This is everything." And yeah, with the natural hair community, they give me so much love everywhere I go. I was in Metagene, Columbia on a Hill somewhere, in a little cafe with a friend. And this girl walked in and then she doubled back and she goes, "Felicia Leatherwood. Oh my God." And I was like, "Yeah. What's going on?" And so, just to be somewhere that's everywhere and nowhere at the same time, and people come up to you and they tell you how much they love your work, and how you've inspired them through creating hairstyles is huge. How you've made their child or their daughter feel better about her hair. That's huge. So, I think that's what I love the most. That keeps me going.

Luvvie: There's a lot that has changed about natural hair and what people think about it in probably the last five, six years. What have you seen that has drastically changed about the way natural hair is approached and thought about?

Felicia: I really see that it's being embraced more. I feel like natural hair, it's almost like a religion where somebody is getting saved everyday. And I always tell people, I'm out here trying to save the edges

Luvvie: I'm out here trying to save edges. That is a worthy cause girl, because our edges be out here struggling.

Felicia: Struggling. And so for me, I might knock on your door with a little leaflet about saving your edges, you never know. But I feel like natural hair is coming to a great place where everywhere you look, you see it. On TV, commercials, film, in the grocery store, it's creating... I think the natural hair community is helping people to color come back together and have something to talk about that's positive, because now we have a sisterhood that's been created. And I love that part. That one there, there's nothing like it. Nothing like seeing another natural, and smiling at her and tell her her hair looks beautiful. And she loves it.

Back in the day when everybody wore relaxers, well not even more so relaxing, but weaves, straight hair, and you walked in the room, I didn't feel that the women were friendly all the time. I felt that there was a cattiness amongst us, and I never enjoyed that part. And I notice a huge difference when women come together and meet in their natural. Total difference, and they call each other sister or sis. That's a whole nother feeling than flinging your hair. You know what I'm saying? Like in somebody's face. And there's nothing wrong with straight hair. So, I don't want anybody listening to think I'm anti straight hair or weaves. I just noticed that there is so much more of a connection with natural hair and I enjoy that.

Luvvie: Yeah. You are an avid traveler. Felicia done been to more African countries than I've been to. What is your favorite thing about travel? What takes you around the world?

Felicia: My favorite thing about traveling is that I get to see a world bigger than me. I feel like when you stay in one spot and you don't get out, you become like a fish in a fish bowl. You only grow so much. And we can talk about a lot of experiences that we see in the media, but to travel and actually be a part of the experience is different. I've learned so much about myself. I've learned so much about culture, whether it's black culture or African culture. I've learned so much about my history. When I went to Kotahena 00:32:57, I went to one of the oldest African town, and they used to actually conrow the maps to be freed, like a freedom map into their hair, so that the slaves would be able to get out. Man, that brought tears to my eyes because we are so amazing in that way. We will always continue to create. So, I think with the traveling, I get to see the many ways that people of color are creating a life for themselves, and I enjoy that the most. And the food.

Luvvie: So, what is your favorite cuisine?

Felicia: Girl. Nigerian.

Luvvie: Yay. Yes, well done. I didn't even coach her you all. I ain't even sliding her a couple of dollars for that.

Felicia: You know me and my egusi and my jollof rice is... just bring it. Hey, got to have it.

Luvvie: When I come to LA, sometimes me and Felicia go to [Veronica's Kitchen](#) and get our lives, that egusi over there. Whew. It is legit.

Felicia: Yeah. I don't know what they putting in that. I'm convinced that Veronica's Kitchen, the food is so incredible. I don't think that they wash the pot. I think they just leave all the steam in and the pot, it just keep creating the same meal because it's too good.

Luvvie: It's too good. I mean, of course, the service is terrible, which is also what lets you know when a restaurant is really good. When a restaurant is really good, the service is usually terrible because they've put all the effort into making sure the food is good and nothing else.

Felicia: So true. So true. But also, I get the real Nigerian experience at Veronica's because I've been to probably about four or five Nigerian restaurants here in LA, and nothing. Veronica's is the only place like Veronica's. I'll keep going back. I just sit there. I order what I need to order, I go straight to my phone and wait for my food to come out. I don't look around. I don't love it. I'm just like, "Where's my food?" And I wait.

Luvvie: I like calling in advance, so they can have my food ready.

Felicia: Girl, but they don't fix it until you get there. The food, you come in to get it, and they're like, "Oh yeah, okay wait." And then another 20 minutes, they're bringing it out so they started making it once you showed up.

Luvvie: That is the true Nigerian experience. You've been to Nigeria a couple of times?

Felicia: Oh yeah. Four or five times.

Luvvie: Oh my gosh. How do you compare Lagos to New York?

Felicia: Huh? That's a good question. Okay. Well, first of all you can't compare Lagos to New York. Lagos, as soon as you get off at the airport, off the plane, Lagos is popping.

Luvvie: Popping.

Felicia: I mean, there's so much happening. New York is popping, but something about Lagos, man. I don't know. I don't even know how to describe it to you. I feel like my neck is going to get broke. There's so much to see in Lagos. I'm like back and forth looking everywhere. There's so much to take in. The energy is so much higher than New York city, to me anyway.

Luvvie: I feel like Lagos is New York on steroids. New York on acid. If New York took shrooms, you got Lagos because you literally land, and instantly you're overwhelmed by everything.

Felicia: That's true.

Luvvie: Just everything. I remember landing one time, and I got off the plane, I was wearing a tee shirt, a tank top under the tee shirt and a jean jacket. Before I got to customs, I was out of the Jean jacket and the tee shirt.

Felicia: Man, yeah. Plus your clothes looks at you like, "Are you serious right now. Are you ready to do this?"

Luvvie: You ain't come prepared? And then I landed on a day when somehow the AC in the whole airport stopped working. Oh man listen, the struggle was so real. But that is part of the Lagos experience, is you take anything as it comes at you. Lagos is basically for me, just crazy. You will be in traffic for three hours trying to get from one place to another. So, it's also-

Felicia: Yeah. And the whole time you could buy a whole situation. It's like a walking mall in Lagos while you're sitting in that traffic, you know that.

Luvvie: Yeah. Because people walk up to the car and be like, "Hey do you need an iPhone charger?" You're like, "Wait what?"

Felicia: It's true. And then I was telling my friend, one day I felt like it was 180 degrees outside, and I said to my friend, "Look at the flies." The flies were moving so slowly. They were so hot. You could have caught a fly in your hand. That's how hot it was. They were moving that slow.

Luvvie: I've never noticed a fly moving slow. I need to check that out because I'm planning on going back in December, which is when it's officially super lit. Have you ever been back in December?

Felicia: No. I would love that.

Luvvie: You should come with us. You should come, because Nigeria in December is basically, everybody who's here comes back over there. So, you basically feel like you're in the States except on a different continent, because you'll see all your friends there. All the same friends you party with here, you would see there. So we're going back in December. Out of all the African countries you've been to, which one feels most like home for you?

Felicia: Benin, West Africa. Benin and Togo, something about those two places. And I have to say Senegal, Dakar. I love that place. Love it. Love it. Love it. So, I've been to South Africa, I've been to East Africa, West Africa, and I got to say that when I'm in Africa period, I feel home. I feel it. I don't know what it is, but I did do two different DNA tests, and I can tell you I'm 75% West African.

Luvvie: I can see it.

Felicia: So, I'm like, "Somebody better claim me over there because I'm 75%." But definitely-

Luvvie: I mean, I believe that. You got the high cheek bones going. We claim you. Yes, absolutely.

Felicia: Yeah. And, I'm like 10% Nigerian, so I don't know if you all would take me, but I'm willing to go.

Luvvie: We will fight the Ghanaians and Senegalese people for you. So, I'm down for that. We want to draft you onto the Nigerian squad and be like, "Yes, she is ours." Especially since you've pledged allegiance to Naija jollof.

Felicia: Yes. And so, there's two things that I'm going to claim I am eventually, and that's a Delta and a Nigerian.

Luvvie: Look, Nigerians want you. The Nigerians want you, so hey, we here for that? I've never been to Benin, but when I did my ancestry test, I'm 100% West African, but it told me that I was 49% Benin and Togo, and 44% Nigerian. So, what that taught me-

Felicia: Wow.

Luvvie: Yeah. It was crazy. I was like, "49% Benin and Togo?" But my grandmother was from the Fulani tribe which is a traveling tribe. So, they have a huge contingency in Benin, and they literally walked to Nigeria, or however way they got there. So, I was like, "Okay, that makes sense." It actually had me digging deeper, like I need to go to Benin myself.

Felicia: Yeah. It's amazing. As soon as my feet hit the ground, I felt the energy of that place. And something was drawing me there, honestly. Because I was in Togo, and I kept feeling like I got to go to Benin. I got to go. And there were so many obstacles to us going. But my friends Shimalay was like, "We going to get there." She booked the car, a driver to take us. And as soon as my foot hit the ground, this feeling came over me that I'm home. It was crazy. Never felt that.

Luvvie: I love that. Yes. And I hope people have that feeling whenever they land on the continent. I hope black folks who go are like, "Yes, this is..." It's so empowering to look around and see nothing but you stare back at you.

Felicia: Yes. Oh my God. Yeah. It's so true. Especially for African American because it's almost like nobody wants to claim us, and we don't want to claim ourselves. So, it's really interesting to be in Africa, and the people say welcome home. To hear that, oh my God. It brings tears to your eyes to be honest.

Luvvie: Look, the Nigerians are claiming all the Black Americans. We're just like, "Hey, you guys are our cousins." Because for me, it's powerful to see somebody born and raised in the United States, whose ancestors were brought over here, but then they look just like my cousin that I know. It's a constant experience when you're like, "Wow, I see your face. You look like a relative of mine." So I think it's a powerful thing to just be like, "Yes." It's something that I hope people get to experience going back and being like, "Yeah. That looks just like my mom," or "Oh. that's my aunt right there."

Felicia: And that's what when I've discovered that most of my DNA was Benin and Togo, I told a friend of mine. She said, "It totally makes sense because of your body structure, and your shape. You look like the women there." So when I got there, I did see a lot of women that look like me. We have a misconception that all Africans are super black or Indigo black, and that's not true. We come in so many shades. Black people come in so many shades. So, you can't even say... And that's another reason which drove me into natural hair because doing natural hair you discover, just because you're black doesn't mean your hair is always going to be kinky. You know what I mean? Or curly. It doesn't have to be. There're so many levels to us, and I love that part.

Luvvie: We are a versatile, layered people. Black looks so different based on where you are. Ghanians are known to be really dark. But I've seen a light-skin Ghanian, and people were like, "Oh wow." We look so different based on where we are. I had a friend in elementary school who's Nigerian,

but she was super bright. I'm talking naturally just bright. I'm like, "Whoa." People can't expect black to look just one way.

Felicia: They can't. Yeah. And now, there's no such thing as black hair. It's textured hair. It's textured because you don't know what texture it's going to be. So, it's not by race that you have a certain type of hair, it's just whatever is in your DNA produces this hair that could be any texture. So, it's not black hair, it's textured hair now.

Luvvie: I mean, all our hairs, also we'll have different textures on one head. The back of my head is wavier and it's so funny, the very back of my head is wavy, and then the very bottom of my hair is super straight, and then the top is kinky. And I'm like, "What is that?"

Felicia: Yeah. You got the Jewish curls on the back.

Luvvie: I got the... I'm like, I'm going to go get my hair cut yesterday, because I cut it all off, by the way. I decided to start from scratch for real again. So my hair is back to the being the length of yours. Me and Felicia both have basically fades now.

Felicia: I love it.

Luvvie: And it naturally waves in the back. It has a little seasickness in the back, and I was like, "Oh snap, check me out."

Felicia: I love it. And you know what Luvvie, I got to say I really enjoy doing your hair because... So, they call me the hair whisperer, right?

Luvvie: I named you that. I called you the hair whisperer.

Felicia: Yes. You told Kim Coles, and then she started telling everybody. And so, part of that is because I can see, I know your diet, I know if you're stressed out, how much rest you get and all these things through the hair strands. And your hair would talk to me, and it would tell me that I don't really know what I want, but I know that I need moisture, and I need love. Also your hair would tell me that you needed to sleep more.

Luvvie: Yes, girl.

Felicia: I think you sleep more now. I think you do.

Luvvie: I do.

Felicia: But as you are building the empire, you will be up. So, your hair would tell me what it needed. And I love that.

Luvvie: I'd sit in your chair and you'd be like, "Girl, so you're not sleeping?" I'm like, "Dang, just read me fulfilled."

Felicia: You were building an empire, so it made sense.

Luvvie: Look, I'm trying to get way more sleep now. I'm like, "Mm-mm (negative). I got to get... No. I am tired." Actually that brings me to this question of, as you're doing all of this stuff, what is your self care regimen? How are you taking care of your heart, your spirit, your soul, all that?

Felicia: Ooh, that's good. Okay. So, I love getting massages. I am the massage queen. I also do cupping, which I think a lot of people didn't know what that was until some of the athletes, the swimmers started getting it done, and the ballplayers. Cupping is really good because it helps your blood circulation. And for people who have issues with deep tissue issues and they keep getting massages, you have to be careful getting a deep tissue massage because you can actually hurt your organs. So, cupping will give you that deep tissue feeling and get in there, but it'll get that blood to circulate and so it releases the pressure that's causing the pain. I do that every other week. I love the spa. I'm a spa girl. Yeah, I love the spa. And then I just got into this thing recently. I don't know if it's going to be everybody's cup of tea, but it's called sound bath. Have you ever heard of the sound bath?

Luvvie: No.

Felicia: Okay. So, I went with a friend of mine because I was having trouble sleeping at one point. And sometimes, if you ever wake up and you just don't feel yourself, your energy is wacky or you feel super emotional, and it's not that time of the month for a woman. Sometimes, we just got to recalibrate ourselves, and the sound bath gave me that. I went into this room where they had all these different types of Tibetan bowls, and they make these incredible sounds. And you lay on this mat, and they darken the room, and they create this music that absolutely balances you out on the inside. It's the best sleep I ever had in my life after being at that sound bath. So, I challenge anybody to look into that. I'm sure they have them all over in different places, but the sound bath has been my new thing. I love it.

Luvvie: Sound bath, so how often do you go?

Felicia: Once a month. Once a month, and you're good.

Luvvie: I'm down to try it. I'm down to try it because I think that could be interesting. Because the one I've been hearing about recently has been the float, the floating tanks.

Felicia: Oh yeah.

Luvvie: Where you float in salt water, so it buoys you up but it's in the complete dark.

Felicia: Yeah. I have heard about that. Yes. This one, I guess they call it a sound bath because you're just being inundated with different types of sounds that actually touch the different shock wave in your body. So, everybody believes something different, but at the end of the day, I'm telling you, you go in that thing, it's going to change you. It's going to change you.

Luvvie: Word.

Felicia: Yeah. I mean, and then also you got to watch what you eat. One thing I really enjoyed, [Will Smith is one of probably my favorite Instagram people to follow](#).

Luvvie: Mine too.

Felicia: Yeah. He's always talking about how as you're making your money and you're growing your business, how you have to take care of everything in terms of keeping your body healthy. So yes, it's good to be wealthy, but it's also great to be healthy so you can enjoy the wealth. So, I really make sure that I do some form of activity regularly, whether it's walking, or bike riding, or something just to get out and feel active, and keep my body movement. I stretch at night. I'll do yoga sometimes. So, I just try to stay active. And I try to watch what I eat because I work on set a lot, and the hours are crazy. They got food all day that's not good for you. I eat with my eyes. If I see it, it looks good, I want it. So, it's hard, you got to pull back. But at the end of the day, I want to be here long enough to enjoy everything I worked hard for. And so, I just try to make sure I take care of myself.

Luvvie: Yeah. Whenever I go to Felicia's place, she always makes me eat vegetables. She's like, "Luvvie, you need to eat some vegetables. I'm going to get you some vegetables." I'm like, "Fine. Give me the green stuff. Okay."

Felicia: That's so true.

Luvvie: And one thing that Felicia did. So, maybe earlier this year, Felicia came and stayed with me in Chicago, I was only there for one out of the three days that she was there. I come back to my house, and Felicia goes, "Hey you should check your bathrooms." And I was like, "What?" Anytime people come to my house now they're completely amused because all my toilets light up in the dark. And that is because Felicia decided to buy light up thingies to put in my toilet. So she's like, "You don't have to turn on the light in the middle of the night." So, people literally would come to my house and be like, "Wait, did the toilet bowl just light up?" That is because Felicia did that.

Felicia: So funny. I mean, you're asleep. You don't want to turn the light on and wake all the way up. You need a little something to guide you.

Luvvie: I loved it. I love it so much. Every time people come they're like, "You would have some light up toilets." I was like, "Because I have amazing friends who make sure." It was so cool. And you made signs for my doors, which are still on there. I was like you are-

Felicia: Really?

Luvvie: Yeah, girl. Yeah.

Felicia: Oh my God. Because I kept opening the closet door, when I was trying to go to the bathroom. So, I was like, "Wait, if I put a sign on here, then maybe I'm not the only one. I don't know, maybe."

Luvvie: You were not the only one. So, they're still there and I just love how thoughtful you are in general, how loving you are, and how basically everyone you meet loves you. So, I am thrilled that basically, your work is just everywhere. Every time you all see Issa by the way, 90% of the

time you see Issa, Felicia did her hair. She is the person who does her hair on Insecure, all of that. So, she's the bomb. I love you. Thank you so much for coming on Rants and Randomness.

Felicia: Thanks for having me. It was wonderful. Thank you.

Luvvie: Oh my goodness. Please make sure you all are following Felicia everywhere. Are you doing anything that you want people to and make sure they know about?

Felicia: Yeah. There's a few things going on. In LA, September the 15th, once a year, me and a couple of other friends, we do this thing called Curls on Film. It's a film festival that basically, it's about us. It's to support and educate us about our hair, and our body. And there are films that are done independently by women of color that deal with body imaging and natural hair. So, that's Curls on Film, September 15th and you could find it on my Instagram page, [@lovingyourhair](#). And then I got that brush that people need to know about. I think I'm the first female black owned brush company, [Brush With the Best](#). And so, I created [a detangler brush](#) specifically for kinky hair. So, you can find me [felicialeatherwood.com](#). You can find the brush with [brushwiththebest.com](#), and then @lovingyourhair, ask me anything.

Luvvie: Boom. People got to follow you because I mean, they're going to get some of these gems. They're going to see some of your work, and just know how dope you are.

Felicia: Thank you.

Luvvie: Yes, indeed. I will see you soon actually.

Felicia: Yes. Thanks so much for having me. And I love this. You ask great questions all the time.

Luvvie: Thank you. Thank you. And enjoy the rest of the week.

Felicia: Okay. You too.

Luvvie: Bye.

Felicia: Bye-bye.

Shout out to Felicia Leatherwood for joining me. She is nothing but pure love. She's so one of my favorite people. Please follow her on social media. She is @lovingyourhair on all the platforms. That's L-O-V-I-N-G-Y-O-U-R-H-A-I-R. You [can buy her detangler brush on her website](#) and find out more about her, and that's [felicialeatherwood.com](#) F-E-L-I-C-I-A-L-E-A-T-H-E-R-W-O-O-D.com. She's dope.

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