



Rants and Randomness with Luvvie Ajayi

Be Everything at Once (with Dami Lee) - Episode 17

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My peoples, welcome to Rants & Randomness. I am Luvvie Ajayi, your wacky wordsmith and this is my podcast where I'm talking about things that I'm loving, things that I'm side eyeing and having really good conversation with really interesting people.

I am here at the Chicago Recording Company bringing y'all the radio voice. And on this episode, I'm feeling good about [the little girls who were going to the pool](#). I'm going to let you know more about that. I'm ranting about that ridiculous presidential alert, spotlighting the [Colored Girls and their new book](#), and interviewing [Dami Lee](#), illustrator and cartoonist. And I have a special interview with somebody who has the name of a vegetable that I am not a fan of. So it's going to be a good episode.

Let's jump into it.

Feel Good

[00:00:50]

So this week, I'm feeling good about the girls who, the [viral video of the little girls on the way to the pool](#). If you have not listened to this or seen this all over the internet, it's been circulating and it's brought me a lot of joy in a time when we've needed the joy. And it's... I'm going to play a little bit for you so you know what I'm talking about.

Audio: Hey ladies.

Audio: Yeah!

Audio: Where y'all going to?

Audio: To the pool!

Audio: Where y'all going to?

Audio: To the pool!

Audio: What you going to do at the pool?

Audio: Swim!

Audio: What you going to do at the pool?

Audio: Swim!

Audio: You going to swim? You going to swim? You going to swim? You going to swim? You going to swim?

Audio: Yes!

Okay, so that video has brought me so much joy. It is of a little girl whose Instagram is [@imlyricangel](#) and it was her birthday. Her grandmother, I guess, threw a sleepover for her and her five closest girlfriends and it is them living their best lives in their unicorn headbands. And it is just so cute and, in a time, when you're just like everything is burning, you need these little moments of pure joy because little mama in the front was giving us all the runway strut. She's clearly been watching somebody. It's so cute. Y'all need to look it up. I actually ended up watching the video on [professionalblackgirl's](#) Instagram account. Literally, [professionalblackgirl](#) is where you can go see it. And yeah, that song is now also stuck in my head.

So I was at my doctor's office last week and one of the nurses calls me in and she goes, "Yo, I thought you were my age." I said, "How old are you?" She was like, "I'm 22." But she looked on my chart and saw my birth date, which is 1985. And she was like, "I had no idea you were 33. You look really young." I said, "Girl, thank you." That made me feel good. And I was like, "You know what? The vitamin C serum is working. I want to thank God, my mama, melanin and good times for that." So yeah man, go find your joy, go watch that video and slather your face with some good moisturizer so somebody can think you're 11 years younger than you are.

I love reading you guys reviews on iTunes. It makes me feel good and I have a couple. SweetMag9 said, "This podcast is good for my soul. In the past 30 days I was on a fast from hanging out, social media, and the news because I needed a break from all of it. So I took time to reset and refocus. During my time off I listened to all the Rants & Randomness. And honey child, you were the mint lemonade my soul needed." Yes! "Totally refreshing. I love everything about this podcast from the topics, to the guests, to the rants, and of course Luvvie. Thank you for the enlightening conversations and so many things to think about." Thank you for you know what I'm saying, listening to me during your fast.

DelianceQueen said, "Her voice is necessary in this day and time as her humor. Me love she." Love you right back.

KickRocks, which I love that name, "Found this podcast by chance. Funny, fresh, grown, but not overly serious. I added this to my collection of grown women podcasts to listen to. Keep it coming sis." I'm going to keep it coming, girl.

CarrieB614, "This is Luvvie. Her podcast is so entertaining, insightful and real. I will caution you to be careful while listening and driving because she will have you falling over in laughter." Well, thank you. Much love y'all. Keep on leaving these reviews on iTunes and I'm going to keep reading them.

Rant

[00:04:21]

My rant is about that stupid presidential alert that most of us got on our phone. I felt almost violated. I felt like somebody stepped in my house and jumped in my face. It was just the weirdest thing ever. We all received an alert. It was emergency test that came from FEMA technically, right? It came from FEMA. They do these things where they let us know. It's like the Amber alert system and everything except it was considered a presidential alert.

And the difference between the alerts that we get like the Amber alerts and the other government alerts is that you cannot turn off a presidential alert. It is mandatory. This was what also... That's what made it invasive. If it was a regular emergency test, I don't think people would be offended by it. The fact that it was considered a presidential alert and you cannot opt out of it, felt slightly invasive. Okay? I was not a fan.

Here's the thing, I wouldn't care much if it was a regular president sending us a presidential alert. I wouldn't because I understand it's a good way to get emergency situations to citizens of a country. It is smart to have. However, the problem is that our president is not just a regular president. Our president happens to be one who engages in constant overreach of power. And the fact that he can now send messages to everyone at the same time is bothersome. Okay? This isn't just FEMA, this is FEMA when their boss is a narcissistic, power-hungry, boundary-less douche bag with the temperament of a toddler. This ain't just FEMA operating as FEMA. I'm afraid one day we're going to get his tweets as presidential alerts in our phones. Right? He going to be mad at somebody and all of a sudden all our phones will light with whoever is... With him dissing whoever he's mad at.

I know the alerts they allow direct communication for terrorist attacks, natural disasters, maybe something that is a threat to public safety. I just don't trust it now that it is in this dude's hands. Now that he can call somebody and say, "Hey, I need this alert sent to everybody," I do not trust it.

So when I got it, because I try to turn off my phone, I completely forgot, all of a sudden all my devices are going nuts, like two phones, an iPad. I was just like, "Okay, no, no, no. Shut it off." Some people actually didn't end up getting it, which I was like what voodoo did you do? I thought everybody had to get it if you did not have airplane mode on, if you were in the country limits, I thought everybody got it. But there were some folks who said they didn't get it. I don't know. It's very [1984-ish](#).

I mean, George Orwell was essentially writing... was basically Miss Cleo. Okay? He predicted the world that we would find ourselves in. I know some people were just like, "I don't why y'all are tripping. This is just an emergency alert." People have to understand why folks were uncomfortable with it. One, you cannot opt out. That is the biggest thing for me is you cannot say, "I do not want to receive this." And there's actually a couple of lawsuits out now that says it violates our first amendment rights. We'll see what happens with that.

Then two, just the idea of Cheeto Satan being able to reach your phone at any given time is frightening. I'm just hoping that this does not become something else that he abuses in this office and I am like, "Do I need to go back to a flip phone?" Because I have kept my Motorola, the Razr. That was my favorite phone because when you hung up on somebody it was really official. I still have it. So I'm like, "Do I have to go back to a flip phone to make sure I don't get presidential alerts? Because I am willing to make that sacrifice. I am willing to do it." Y'all might have to send me a message in a bottle because this is where I'm going to have to tap out. If I ever get a tweet that's a presidential alert, I might just have to just quit everything. So y'all pray for us. Let's hope we don't get another one of these.

Randomness Spotlight

[00:08:30]

This week I'm spotlighting the Colored Girls and their new book [For Colored Girls Who've Considered Politics](#). [Donna Brazile](#), [Yolanda Caraway](#), [Leah Daughtry](#) and [Minyon Moore](#) consider themselves the Colored Girls. They are basically the best auntie posse. On October 2nd they released their book [For Colored Girls Who've Considered Politics](#).

All of these women are essentially Olivia Popes of politics. Everybody Auntie Donna. I mean, Yolanda Caraway is somebody who has worked in politics since the Robert Kennedy campaign. She worked 1964. Epic, okay? Leah Daughtry was a president of the DNC. And Minyon Moore is basically Hillary Clinton's right-hand woman and just a deep, deeply experienced woman who knows the ins and outs of politics. And together, they are the Colored Girls. That is a dope squad name to have.

So, their book came out October 2nd, and it shares the story of their friendship and how it has changed politics in America, how basically most political campaigns that have happened in the US on a federal level, they've been involved in it in some way. To the point where reading their book in 2004, whoever was running for president, anybody who was considering running for president had to have dinner with the Colored Girls first before they could even get really started on their campaigning. This is how powerful these women are.

The book is written by [Veronica Chambers](#), who's a prolific author and former editor of the New York Times magazine and she edited the 2017 collection of essays about Michelle Obama called, [Meaning of Michelle](#). And that, basically, this book that she wrote for the Colored Girls, about the Colored Girls gives a behind the scenes look at what politics looks like and the presidential campaigns of the past, including Jesse Jackson.

These women were involved in some of these campaigns on a very deep level. I mean, Yolanda was a huge part of Jesse's campaign strategy. They were of course involved in Hillary Clinton's campaign and if Hillary was president, odds are the Colored Girls would be working in the White House right now.

Y'all, these women are the truth. Not only are they just these incredibly strong and powerful black women, but their friendship is inspiring, their friendship that spanned decades and how they bring each other into rooms. It is so inspiring. They're basically set it off of politics. So Yolanda Caraway became the Democratic National Committee's director of education and training in the 1980s. Minyon

Moore was a former assistant to President Clinton, and former CEO of the DNC. Donna Brazile is a strategist, campaign manager, political analyst, author. She was the first African-American woman to direct a major presidential campaign because she was Al Gore's campaign manager in 2000. Leah Daughtry, CEO of 2016 and 2008 DNC. I think she's the first person who did the role twice in a row. These women have made history.

Once I read the book, they actually sent me the book months ago. And I literally read it in about two sittings. I think it only took me like six hours. It's too good. It's so much tea about what happens behind the scenes that we never know. So, I actually sent them my thoughts June 12th after I finished reading it. This is what I told the Colored Girls about their book.

For Colored Girls is basically part history book, part biography, but wholly significant. I'm so glad this book exists because the stories of these four women who were instrumental in so many moments of history needed to be told. I'm honored that we can take a sip of their life tea in this way because what they've done and been a part of are the watershed moments of this nation's contemporary politics. It also doesn't hurt that it's super juicy, y'all. Super juicy.

The transparency of the Colored Girls as they tell their stories is admirable. When I finished this book what I understood is how we have walking icons in our midst and this was the opportunity to sit at their feet and soak in their lessons, wisdom and noir pixie dust. I'm basically going to start calling them all my aunties. The Colored Girls are peak auntie goals. I salute you Leah, Donna, Yolanda, Minyon and thank you for showing black girls and women that we too belong in the rooms that we are in.

These women have made room for me too. At the DNC in 2016, Leah... It was two months before my book came out, Leah and the Colored Girls insisted that my book would be at the brunch that they throw at every DNC. They do an invite-only brunch of like 200 of the top black women in business and politics and tech and media. And not only did they invite me, they were like, "We want to make sure that your book is there." They have gifting suite there and I was like, "My book is not even coming out yet." They went out of their way to make sure that I had some type of presence there. So, in the gifting suite I had a table and I brought excerpts of my audio book for people to take.

It meant so much to me that these women thought that my work was necessary in this way and they wanted to create space for it. So when their book was coming out, I was like, "I got to show it love." And it is not... I'm not just showing the love because they showing me love, it's also just really good. And it let me know more about what happens behind these curtains. There's a chapter in there where they talk about the night of the election, November 2016, what happened, how Hillary was feeling. It was cool to kind of read that. So these women are dope.

And then, on October 20th in Chicago, I would be hosting them a book event in conversation with all four of them. Me, I'm sharing the stage with these aunties. Okay? It's going to be at the Rainbow Push Coalition from 11 AM to 1 PM in Chicago. There'll be a book signing immediately following the book conversation. So if you're in the Chicago area and can come through, come through, but order this book. I feel like this book needs to be something that they assign folks in school. It gives so much

information about these important moments. And also, it shows the types of sacrifices that it takes to be somebody who commits yourself to public service in this way and they've done that.

So For Colored Girls Who've Considered Politics. Y'all can get it anywhere where books are sold, [Amazon](#), Barnes & Noble. Definitely order you a copy. You would not regret it. And yeah, read up more on the Colored Girls y'all. They're super epic. Super epic. These women are just iconic. So it's going to be a good conversation. I'm not sure if it's going to be live-streamed or anything, but definitely check out the book and follow them on social media. I'll put their handles in the show notes.

All right, this episode is particularly special because I'm giving you not one, but two interviews. You might recall on episode 14 my rant was about how I don't really mess with kale and the qua because I think kale is basically a high-maintenance vegetable and it's not even good enough to be that high-maintenance. So, funny enough at Chicago Recording Company where I record this podcast, I was informed that they have an intern whose name is Kale. And I was like, "Yo, I got to talk to Kale. I must talk to Kale because I have questions."

First they laughed at me because they're like, "What?" And I was like, "Yes, no. Where's Kale? Let him know him and I need to be in conversation." Because I wanted to know what it was like to share the name with a high-maintenance vegetable, a really trendy vegetable that people are out loving. So, I have Kale Ewing here.

Interview with Kale

[00:16:42]

Luvvie: First they laughed at me because they're like, "What?" And I was like, "Yes, no. Where's Kale? Let him know him and I need to be in conversation." Because I wanted to know what it was like to share the name with a high-maintenance vegetable, a really trendy vegetable that people are out loving. So I have Kale [Yewing 00:16:42] here. Hi Kale.

Kale: Hello.

Luvvie: What did you think when they told you, "Luvvie wants to interview you"?

Kale: Yeah, well, they told me within the context like you just said that you hate the vegetable, so I was like, "Great. Let's get this going."

Luvvie: Okay, so my first... Okay, since you are... How old are you?

Kale: 28.

Luvvie: 28. So you basically were born before Kale become a thing.

Kale: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Luvvie: So I know your parents didn't name you after kale.

Kale: Right.

Luvvie: The vegetable. Where did they get the name from?

Kale: It was a family friend.

Luvvie: Named Kale?

Kale: Yeah. Yeah, and I think his name may have started with a C, which is how I've seen it spelled more often than mine, but I'm the youngest of three. We all have names that start with K and are not normal. So yeah, they needed to come up with some K name when I came along and yeah.

Luvvie: That's what they rocked with.

Kale: That's what they did.

Luvvie: So now that kale the vegetable is a thing, how do people... One, how do you introduce yourself? And then two, how do people basically react to you when you say, "My name's Kale"?

Kale: Yeah, I mean, I always say now, I say, "My name's Kale, like the vegetable." But I couldn't even say that when I was younger. Like you said, it wasn't as much as a popular thing when I was younger. So in high school, if I was at McDonald's or something where they call out your name for your order.

Luvvie: Yeah.

Kale: I would just lie and say my name was Dave or something so I wouldn't get asked, "What? How do you spell that?" But now I can say that and people are like, "Oh, okay." They might give a look, but they at least know the word unless I'm at somewhere that's like a healthy place. You know, protein bar or something like that. Then if I say my name's Kale they're like, "No, it isn't."

Luvvie: No.

Kale: Yeah. I'm like, "Sorry."

Luvvie: Do you actually eat kale?

Kale: Rarely. Like you said, it's a high-maintenance vegetable.

Luvvie: See? So you also don't like kale?

Kale: Yeah, it's not great. I had a professor in college claim that she made a creamed kale dish that was delicious and offered to make me some. I said sure because what college student turns down free food?

Luvvie: Yeah.

Kale: But she never did. So I can't confirm that there is any good way to make it.

Luvvie: So Kale doesn't like kale.

Kale: I mean, it's fine. I don't hate it. There are foods I guess that are worse, but it's just a tougher lettuce.

Luvvie: What are the worst jokes you've heard?

Kale: Just you know, "Oh, your parents should have named you broccoli." That's a big one. Actually, apparently my great-grandmother said that when I was born too. She was one of the few who knew it. I mean, that's the worst one, or just, "Oh, you must be super healthy," which I like to think that I am, but yeah, those are the usual comments, or just some other vegetable. My wife's grandma likes to call me cauliflower actually.

Luvvie: Wow.

Kale: Yeah.

Luvvie: That-

Kale: Yeah.

Luvvie: She's like, "I'm going to pick another vegetable to call you instead of Kale."

Kale: Yeah.

Luvvie: Maybe that's actually a form of love.

Kale: Maybe, yeah, I mean-

Luvvie: Maybe she prefers it to Kale.

Kale: Yeah, it seems like she likes me.

Luvvie: How old were you when kale did get popular?

Kale: I mean, I want to say it was less than 10 years ago, so maybe I was 20, 21. I feel like it was when I was in college. I feel like especially when it blew up was when Beyoncé wore that kale shirt. Instead of Yale, it said kale.

Luvvie: Yeah.

Kale: And then she wore that in the [7/11 music video](#). So, if anyone's heard of Beyoncé they may have heard of kale.

Luvvie: They may have heard.

Kale: But yeah, that was my Facebook profile picture for a while because how often does Beyoncé-

Luvvie: Rep your name?

Kale: Rep your name, exactly.

Luvvie: Do you rep your name? Do you wear kale shirts?

Kale: I don't. I feel like that's a little too much. Maybe it's a little meta or just arrogant, but my wife loves it.

Luvvie: Really?

Kale: Oh yeah.

Luvvie: So she wears kale shirts?

Kale: Yeah, she has a kale shirt. She has kale socks. She has a tank top that says, "Just kaling it." And she also when we got engaged, she got a sweatshirt that says, "License to kale," instead of license to kill.

Luvvie: Nice. Very nice.

Kale: So yeah, she's into it.

Luvvie: I'm totally about that because why not turn you into a meme?

Kale: Exactly. Yeah, I'll take it.

Luvvie: Yes. So see? I had to have this conversation with Kale because I literally was curious. I was like, "Wait. You guys tell me more about Kale." They were like, "Why don't you talk to him?" So this has been illuminating because even Kale doesn't love kale. He doesn't hate it, but he doesn't love it. That should tell you something. I'm just saying.

Luvvie: Thanks for coming Kale.

Kale: Of course, thanks for having me.

Luvvie: Indeed.

Interview with Dami Lee

[00:21:02]

Luvvie: Rants & Randomness fans I am excited to welcome artist and author [Dami Lee](#) to the show. Dami, thank you for joining me.

Dami: Yay! Thanks. I'm so excited to be here.

Luvvie: Yo, so I'm going to give your short bio because you kept it short.

Dami: Okay.

Luvvie: And you are amazing so they need to know.

Dami: Aww.

Luvvie: So Dami Lee is a Seoul-born, New York-based artist. She currently writes about the internet for the Verge and has drawn comics for the New Yorker, BuzzFeed, Cosmopolitan and premium mustard brands. Her brand new book [Be Everything at Once](#) is in stores now. And she's behind some of your favorite memes. You just don't know it. So yes, welcome to the show.

Dami: Thank you so much.

Luvvie: I start every interview by asking what did you want to be when you were growing up?

Dami: I actually have a comic about this in the book, but I really did want to be a cartoonist when I was little just because really liked drawing and stuff, but it was always in a way that kids kind of want to be like Batman or a bear. You know? I really didn't think it was a viable career even. So that was kind of the reason why I didn't really go to art school or think of it as a real thing that people could do to make money. But yeah, I'm still... I guess that's kind of why I have two jobs and why that's the premise of the book and the spirit of being everything at once.

Luvvie: Now, what even gave you the idea that being a cartoonist was something? You know how a lot of times when you're little-

Dami: Right.

Luvvie: ... you just think about the very traditional careers.

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: How did you come upon cartooning?

Dami: Yeah, I mean, I think it started, I got the idea in my head when I was little. So, I was born in Korea and we immigrated to America when I was six. So, I spent a lot of time in a library and just kind of I gravitated towards comic books. So, there's a lot of Garfield books, just liked reading one after the other and that's when I got the idea. I was like, "Oh, this is kind of fun, kind of

cool." Then when I went to college I started drawing comics for the school newspaper. That was mainly motivated by I got \$10 for every comic strip I did. I was like, "Yeah, I can put this toward the burrito fund, so hell yeah."

Luvvie: The burrito fund.

Dami: Yeah. I'm from California so it's like I just kind of got obsessed with California burritos and carne asada fries and just the San Diego... The Mexican food there is just so amazing.

Luvvie: When you came here from the US, you're talking to another immigrant of course.

Dami: Right.

Luvvie: So how was that transition when you were the first... first day of school.

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: What was that like for you?

Dami: I mean, it's weird because I don't remember it being... I don't remember my first day specifically at all, but I do remember certain, not traumatic, but kind of the experiences that stuck with me more than others. I remember I went to the school library and I wanted to check out a book, but the librarian was like, "Oh, well, you already have another book checked out and you need to return that before you can get another one." And I really wanted to tell her that I left book at my desk in the classroom and I couldn't remember the word for desk or I didn't know what the word was. So it was just kind of frustrating not being able to get my thoughts across.

I remember having different versions of this experience because I moved back and forth between Korea and America a lot. So when I moved back to Korea in the third grade I kind of had like the reverse version of this event where now English was the language I was more comfortable with and I had kind of forgotten most of my Korean so it was harder to make friends in Korea. Then, I moved back to America and it was weird because I had already considered English as my most fluent language and then the school was like, "Oh well, you're from Korea so we're going to put you in this ESL class."

Luvvie: Oh wow.

Dami: And I was like, "I actually know how to speak English," but they kind of didn't realize this until a couple of days in, so I ended up getting transferred out of that. But yeah, it was just weird culture shocks and reverse culture shocks and different experiences like that.

Luvvie: You were literally going from one continent to the other.

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: How did you adapt as a kid to the moves?

Dami: Yeah, I mean, I think it's definitely easier for kids to make friends faster. I think it would've been a lot harder if I were going through these changes when I was a little bit older and that's one of the struggles that my brother had a lot because he's seven years older.

Luvvie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dami: And so he was like prime puberty age. He was 13 and dealing with high school and studying for the SATs when he was in this new country. So I think he definitely had a harder time than I did.

Luvvie: Do you still have any friends from when you were young? Were you able to keep in touch with anybody?

Dami: Yeah. I remember, it was the days before email, so my friends and I would send each other snail mail and letters, and I just have a whole stash of letters in my house now. And it's weird because they're from friends that I was pretty close with back then that now we just kind of don't speak anymore. We kind of drifted apart naturally. But yeah, some of the good ones I've managed to hold onto.

Luvvie: So funny enough, fun fact, your name Dami is actually one of my middle names.

Dami: Oh, are you serious?

Luvvie: Yeah.

Dami: Yeah, I have heard that Dami's actually a Nigerian name.

Luvvie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dami: Or like a shortened version of Damilola.

Luvvie: Yeah, yeah. Nailed it.

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: Yeah.

Dami: I totally get that on Twitter sometimes and people are like, "Are you Yoruba?" And I'm like, "No, I'm Korean." Yeah.

Luvvie: Hey, that shows that there's a lot of synergy in our cultures.

Dami: I know. That's amazing. Did you kind of have similar experiences growing up?

Luvvie: Oh totally. I came here when I was nine.

Dami: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Luvvie: So I had the strong accent. I was like, "You guys not going to know my name, so let me switch it up."

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: Let me go buy a new name. And then I also didn't bring sandwiches to school for lunch.

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: I brought like jollof rice.

Dami: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Luvvie: So it's kind of that whole you are really different.

Dami: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Luvvie: But you know, kids adapt.

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: So I actually had my... English has always been one of my main languages.

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: But I also, I'm fluent in Yoruba. So when I came here, there were certain things that weren't the same. So instead of asking for a pen from my classmates, I'd ask for a biro.

Dami: Oh, okay.

Luvvie: And they'd be like, "What?" And I'd be like, "Oh okay. I'm supposed to think. Okay. Pen."

Dami: Yeah, yeah.

Luvvie: Because our slangs are different.

Dami: Uh-huh (affirmative). Yeah, you really kind of have to take a moment to yourself to think about what word to use at some times. It's like having two different brains and switching it on and off depending on who you're talking to.

Luvvie: Which language do you think in?

Dami: I mean, I think in English now, but I distinctly remember like a switch happening where... I mean, I used to dream in Korean and then now all of a sudden I started dreaming in English and yeah, but I mean, at home I only speak Korean to parents and to my family, to my dog.

Luvvie: Your dog knows Korean?

Dami: Yeah, he only knows Korean.

Luvvie: Oh, that's kind of cool.

Dami: I mean, but he lives in Korea with my parents.

Luvvie: Okay.

Dami: So that's his native language.

Luvvie: Got it.

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: So when you started college what was your major?

Dami: Yeah, I didn't go to art school even though I sort of wanted to, but I just was afraid of boxing myself in.

Luvvie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dami: So I went to college and I chose the broadest major, which was like communication and political science. So those, I guess those maybe just kind of help me in my job now as a tech reporter, but also the experience of going to college and starting to draw for the school newspaper. That has probably affected me more.

Luvvie: Oh. You know what's funny? It's always interesting to find out what people majored in in college and how different what they do now is because my major was psychology.

Dami: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Luvvie: I'm clearly not a psychologist, but that is-

Dami: I'm sure it helps you a lot though with your podcast and understanding people.

Luvvie: Yeah. Yeah, I hope so because otherwise my mom was like, "I paid for how many years for what now?"

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: Did your parents ever give you the pressure of the immigrant, doctor, lawyer, engineer?

Dami: Right, right.

Luvvie: Did you ever get that?

Dami: Yeah. I mean, I went to a really competitive high school in Cupertino and all of my classmates were studying engineering and bio and medicine, and I kind of just knew from even an early age that I was not cut out for that. Math was never my strong suit. So yeah, my parents they never really pressured me to do anything one way or another, but they do kind of tease me sometimes. They're like, "You majored in communication and you can't even communicate." I'm like, "No, you're right." But it's funny because in Korea comics are actually a really big thing over there and you get on the subway and you see people scrolling through comics on their phones and a lot of times the web comics get turned into Korean dramas or movies. So it's actually a pretty cool job to have there and I think my parents are pretty proud, which was good.

Luvvie: Right. I think they needed the proof first.

Dami: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Luvvie: And you started with an internship, a fellowship at [BuzzFeed](#).

Dami: Yeah, so that's actually what brought me to New York from Korea because I moved there after college. Mostly out of guilt from my parents. They were like, "You got your American education and now you got to come back to Korea and be with us." So that was a shock to me and I really resisted going at first, but then my dad kind of ended up having some health problems and I was like, "Well, I got to be a good daughter and I should go."

So I went and we sort of had an unofficial deal that I would stick it out for three years and see how it went, but it was really hard to adapt to that Korea corporate work culture and the patriarchy and the hierarchy there. And it was... Yeah, there was definitely a struggle to fit back in, but I'm super grateful that I've had that experience. It changed me as a person and got me thinking about my identity as a Korean-American. So, I think everyone should go back to their motherland at least once as an adult and see what's that's like.

Luvvie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dami: Because it really just fills you out as a person I think. I never thought about trying to get better at Korean and reclaiming that language before, but I'm just so glad that I did and it just makes me appreciate my life in New York more now. And I still think New York and Seoul are really similar, but I always refer to it as like the Stranger Things Upside Down versions of each other.

Luvvie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dami: And whichever one is the Upside Down changes depending on how well the subway's running that day. Just like... Yeah.

Luvvie: Yeah. It's interesting when you go across the world and you're like, "Oh, this is basically another version of New York." It's like Lagos.

Dami: Yes.

Luvvie: Which is like New York on steroids.

Dami: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Luvvie: Your book, [Be Everything at Once: Tales of a Cartoonist Lady](#), first of all, it's hilarious. I've been a huge fan of comics since I was in high school. And I used to read the Boondocks comics in the newspaper when I was going to school. You do four-panel comics and part of how you've also gotten notoriety is because of tweets that you would turn into cartoons. I want you to talk about that.

Dami: Yeah. There was a series that I did called [Illustrated Internet](#) and I would take funny tweets or Tumblr posts and turn them into comics. The first one that I did was the parody of the Outkast song, 'I'm Sorry Ms. Jackson. I think everyone seen that tweet. It's like legendary. It's like, "I'm sorry Ms. Jackson. I am four eels." So, I turned that into a comic and it ended up going viral on Reddit. And I think that's how an agent saw it and she reached out to me to see if we could turn that concept of translating song lyrics into a book.

That was originally how we pitched it to different publishers. And in the talking around with different editors, there was an editor at Chronicle who kind of like saw my background and my story of moving back and forth between Korea and the States and she actually felt like that would make for a better book instead. So that's how I ended up making the book.

Luvvie: How long did it take you to create this book?

Dami: I mean, from start to finish, it was maybe like two years. Reaching out and getting an agent and pitching to publishers, but the actual work time they gave me was like three months.

Luvvie: Oh wow.

Dami: So, it was the most overwhelming time in my life because I was also working a full-time job at the same time. And it didn't occur to me that it could do a book leave, but I... Yeah, that's I guess things you learn as you go. And I've learned that the publishing industry is like super slow and most of it is just like waiting around for confirmation.

Luvvie: Yeah.

Dami: Like feedback from the team. So yeah, now that I've kind of dipped my toe in that water, I definitely want to work on a second book maybe.

Luvvie: This book is really funny because it also chronicles your life.

Dami: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Luvvie: It basically turns a mirror on you and you talk about your ridiculousness. How were you able to choose what you were going to say? How were able to be vulnerable in this comic book form?

Dami: Yeah, it was a challenge kind of deciding which comic would go in the book. There's like half of them is from my web series [As Per Usual](#), and have half of them are new. And I kind of wanted people to come away from the book feeling like they saw a story from start to finish. So, it's

divided into six chapters in different phases of my life. And yeah, I just kind of wanted to show the full picture and the whole story of how I became the person I am today. So, [the Be Everything at Once](#) part is both about the struggle of having a full-time job, but also pursuing your passions on the side and also, balancing, being this Korean-American person who balances two different cultures. So, it's like all the frantic-ness of my life kind of condensed into a book.

Luvvie: What would you advise somebody who wants to be an illustrator and a cartoonist?

Dami: Mm-hmm (affirmative). It's hard for me to try to give advice on that I think because I've always thought of either one of my jobs being a backup for the other.

Luvvie: Okay.

Dami: So I'm always like, "Oh, in case this whole cartooning thing doesn't work out I can always rely on journalism," or, "If this media company suddenly goes under one day, I can rely on my art." So I always kind of diversifying and like stretching out across different skills and I'm always trying to learn a new skill. I want to get better at illustration and maybe learn 3D or animation. That's going really slowly, but I'm always on the lookout for something else I could be doing because I'm constantly paranoid that something could go wrong at any minute.

Luvvie: Okay.

Dami: So that's my biggest advice.

Luvvie: Because the hustle does not stop?

Dami: Yeah, it just like never ends. I'm constantly working, after work, on the weekends. I feel like I'm going to breakdown any minute, but I also just I... But then I get anxious if I'm not doing anything.

Luvvie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dami: If I'm sitting around and there's nothing to do I'm like, "My life has no meaning. I have no purpose." So I feel like I need to always be busy with something.

Luvvie: So it's fair to say you're a workaholic?

Dami: I guess, yeah.

Luvvie: So you write on [the Verge](#) also.

Dami: Yes.

Luvvie: Which came first, the writing or the art?

Dami: Definitely the art. So the Verge came after my BuzzFeed fellowship ended. And it's a learning experience. I did not know anything about tech before I started this job and every day I'm learning something new about phones, or apps, or everything.

Luvvie: Ooh, so are you an Android person or a Apple?

Dami: Apple.

Luvvie: Really?

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: Why?

Dami: I mean, do you have an Android?

Luvvie: I am an Android team, yes.

Dami: Whoa. Yeah, I used to be on that Samsung team, but I just think it's a lot of easier to be more intuitive. It's like Android is just too overwhelming. It's too customizable and I just like working with what I have been given.

Luvvie: You know, see, I stick with team Android also because our cameras are superb.

Dami: Yeah, they are. It's totally true.

Luvvie: Yeah.

Dami: But I just can't give up that blue iMessage bubble.

Luvvie: Listen...

Dami: Actually, yeah, one of the reasons why switched to an iPhone was when I moved to Korea I needed a way to kind of communicate with my friends through iMessage. I had this paranoia that if I... Like the harder I make it for people to talk to me, the better chance that we'll drift apart. So I was like, "I need to make this as easy as possible for everyone. I'll just get on iMessage." And then that lets you text people internationally. So that was one of the reasons.

Luvvie: You know, I forced my friends to all download [WhatsApp](#).

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: And I was like, "Because y'all not going to dis me by my green bubble in the group chat."

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: So I moved everybody to WhatsApp.

Dami: Wow. Wait, I think if you're the kind of friend who has that much influence, they must love you a lot. I do that for very special people, yeah. I have one that... Yeah.

Luvvie: Yeah. It's either WhatsApp or [GroupMe](#), but I found GroupMe to be clunky.

Dami: Oh yeah.

Luvvie: So I was like, "Just plug into WhatsApp because also when I'm out of the country I can just be on Wi-Fi and I'll be able to talk to you."

Dami: Right.

Luvvie: So now I have like 15 group threads.

Dami: I use [Line](#).

Luvvie: Wait, what's Live?

Dami: Line. L-I-N-E.

Luvvie: Line, oh.

Dami: Yeah. They use that in Japan a lot so I use that with one friend who... It was Japan and Taiwan. I would use it with one friend who was in Taiwan for one summer. And then I use [Kakao](#). That's the national app of Koreans.

Luvvie: Oh. See? Yeah, I think I used Line one time.

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: And then I used [Signal](#). Have you used Signal before?

Dami: Signal, is that like the really super encrypted-

Luvvie: Yeah, that one.

Dami: Yeah, yeah.

Luvvie: And then I got lazy and I was like, "Eh. Okay, no."

Dami: It's too overwhelming. There's too many choices.

Luvvie: It is. There's too many choices. And then somebody tried to make me download [Marco Polo](#).

Dami: I don't even know what that is.

Luvvie: So Marco Polo's one where you send video messages. And I was just like, "I don't want to... This is too much pressure."

Dami: Oh my gosh. That's asking way too much of somebody. Yeah.

Luvvie: I was just like, "No, no, no, no, I'm not interested." So what is your favorite app then in terms of communicating with people?

Dami: Probably just like iMessage or a lot of people will communicate through Facebook Messenger, but I'm trying not to use Facebook these days.

Luvvie: Ooh.

Dami: Yeah, it's different for every person. Yeah. If a person wants to communicate through Facebook then if I like them enough then I'll do it for them. Yeah, but usually-

Luvvie: So then what's your favorite social app then? Instagram, Facebook or Twitter?

Dami: Oh yeah. Probably Instagram. I mean, Twitter is good for jokes, but yeah that's also a hell hole these days.

Luvvie: Yes.

Dami: And then Instagram is fun, but I hate the explore tab so much.

Luvvie: Yeah.

Dami: I wish they could get rid of it because it's full of garbage and spam.

Luvvie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dami: Yeah, I get so lost in that tab and I have to remind myself to stop.

Luvvie: Instagram has been killing me softly lately because they've changed the algorithm a thousand times and it's trash now in terms of like-

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: You would be like, "How did 400 people see this story when I have this many... " It's kind of crazy.

Dami: Yeah, yeah. All apps are bad.

Luvvie: All apps are bad, but we're on it. We cannot help ourselves.

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: We cannot help ourselves. I'm just like one of these days I'm going to take a break from like... Maybe a week. I've done week-long breaks. What's the longest you've gone not being on social?

Dami: Honestly, it's sad, but probably not very long. Maybe like one or two days. I don't know.

Luvvie: I've done seven days where I disappeared.

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: And then I come back.

Dami: How did it go?

Luvvie: You know, the one thing I always walk away with when I do those is my brain is way more, it's way less overwhelmed and I am happier.

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: You don't understand how much the influx of information actually does bog you down until you don't have any in your face anymore.

Dami: Right.

Luvvie: So even knowing this-

Dami: I mean, I feel like-

Luvvie: ... I still need to quit.

Dami: Yeah, the one time I went camping in high school it was we didn't have reception. But this was like 2008, so we didn't have Instagram or anything like that. And I remember we got back from camping, it was a couple of days and I was like, "Oh, let's see what happened in the news." And it was like they got Bin Laden. And I was like, "What is this?" I was like, "Wow, okay. I guess I missed out on a lot."

Luvvie: Yeah, I think one time in 2015 I went on a cruise, like Summit at Sea and for three days, we didn't have any access to the real world. I'm talking phones didn't work, so you couldn't text anybody, there was no internet. We came back and it was like, yes there was a terrorist bombing in Paris. I was like, "What?"

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: I leave for three days and the world burns.

Dami: God.

Luvvie: It's scary.

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: I always ask my guests as you are doing everything that you're doing and chasing dreams and being dope and writing books, how are you taking care of yourself? What is your self-care routine? What are the things you have to do?

Dami: Oh yeah. I think that when I want to get away from the screens I like to cook, but I guess that's kind of, what do you call it? In order to cook, I need to watch YouTube to teach me how to cook.

Luvvie: Yeah.

Dami: So, I'm like following along with the tutorials and what not, but yeah, I really love cooking. I've been exploring how to cook Korean food more. Yeah, that's how I like to unwind.

Luvvie: So, wait, you're not like a massage type girl, facial?

Dami: Oh my God, no I can't.

Luvvie: Really?

Dami: I get so weird with people touching me. I went to get a pedicure once and it was so ticklish I couldn't do it. I got a massage once and it was like way too painful. So, I like doing yoga. That's about it.

Luvvie: Oh, let's see. So, you're not a manicure, pedicure, facial girl, but you're a cooking girl and then you do yoga.

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: So, does yoga slow your mind down?

Dami: It gets me moving, which is good. It's the only time I get any exercise. Yeah, I'm hunched over on my desk all day, lying in weird positions so I really need to stretch out my limbs.

Luvvie: Got it. What about beauty? What do you do in terms of a beauty... What do you do for your face?

Dami: Oh. Yeah, yeah.

Luvvie: What products are you using?

Dami: I have a friend who started this Korean beauty company. It's a website called [Soko Glam](#) and they sell Korean beauty products. So, she recently hooked it up for me. I used to not put anything on my face really. I have the driest face ever, but then after I moved to Korea I was like everyone is taking such good care of themselves here. Everyone looks amazing and here I am in this hoodie and a dry face. So, I really started paying attention more to my appearance after that. But yeah, you know the 10-step Korean skincare routine?

Luvvie: Yeah, do you do that?

Dami: No, that's way too much for me, but I recently started doing the double cleanse method, which is you remove your makeup with oil first.

Luvvie: Okay.

Dami: And then you do the foam cleanser. It was amazing. I was like there's no way you can get me to wash my face twice, but I did it and I was like, "Whoa, this has made such a difference."

Luvvie: So, the oil cleanse thing, I struggle with that because I-

Dami: Yeah, because it's weird, right?

Luvvie: Yeah.

Dami: You're doing it with dry face, dry hands and you're like slathering oil all over your face and your makeup is getting everywhere.

Luvvie: Yeah.

Dami: And you think it's going to dirty up your pores more, but it's actually kind of melting the makeup off and it just does a better job of removing everything.

Luvvie: So what is your regular skincare routine? So you do the double cleanse and then what else are you using?

Dami: Yeah. And then I guess I'll just like this essence. It's like an essence, like a... Yeah, I just put that on my face and then I do lotion. And then sometimes I have treatment for acne scars or dark circles. Then if I'm feeling like extra fancy I'll do a face mask.

Luvvie: Are you a serum girl?

Dami: Only if there's like big issue or if I'm feeling particularly ugly or dry.

Luvvie: Uh-huh (affirmative). So what serums do you use?

Dami: I don't know. It's like a Korean brand. There's one called... I don't know how to translate it. It's called like The Beauty of Who. It's like these Korean brands have these insane names. But yeah, it's just anything that mom kind of brings over sometimes. She brought so much when she visited New York a few months ago and she was like, "You can have all this skincare, all this lotion stuff." And I was like touched and I was like, "Oh mom." And then she was like, "No, it's because they don't fit in my luggage. I bought so much stuff here." I was like, "Okay." But yeah, it helped a lot. Just use whatever she recommends.

Luvvie: You have access to the liquid gold because according to YouTube, the 10-step Korean is like face life-changing.

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: I was like I'm too lazy for it.

Dami: I would highly recommend it. Yeah.

Luvvie: All 10 steps. I think I do four steps.

Dami: Okay.

Luvvie: I do the cleaning. So, I don't double cleanse. I don't use oil cleanser yet.

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: Because again, I cannot wrap my head around it.

Dami: I know, I just got into it, but you should just do it once and you will feel a difference.

Luvvie: Okay, I'm going to try it.

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: So, I do, I wash my face and then I just started using rosewater toner.

Dami: Okay.

Luvvie: I wipe my face with rosewater toner and then I use a vitamin C serum.

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: And then I use my moisturizer. So that's four steps. And then sunscreen, so it's five.

Dami: That's great. Yeah. Yeah, sunscreen's so important. And then yeah, I forgot to mention the toner because I use this product [beauty water](#), beauty water and I used to use that lot more because it would just get more of the makeup off. But then since I started using the oil cleanser, I was like, "Oh, yeah, my face is very clean." But yeah, I just have a lot of fun exploring everything.

Luvvie: Got it. Yeah, it's always fascinating to find out what people do to pamper themselves.

Dami: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Luvvie: But see, people don't think about the beauty stuff as the pampering.

Dami: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Luvvie: Good to know. Good to know. I'm always looking for new stuff. I'm trying not to become a product junkie.

Dami: Yeah, I think once you find something that works for you and stick with it, that's all you need.

Luvvie: You're right. You are right about that.

Dami: Yep.

Luvvie: So, thank you so much for coming on Rants & Randomness. Are you on tour for this book yet?

Dami: No, I only just did a signing at New York Comic Con and San Diego Comic Con so I'm not really on tour. I'm just based in New York.

Luvvie: Got it.

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: Well, it's really funny. It's so good to just kind of sift through it.

Dami: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Luvvie: I'm glad you did it because they don't think about women as illustrators and cartoonists.

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: So, you're representing this little girl somewhere who's probably like, "Oh, I can actually be a cartoonist now."

Dami: Yeah.

Luvvie: So, thank you for writing this book.

Dami: That's why I loved calling myself the cartoonist lady person on the cover.

Luvvie: The cartoonist lady person. Yup, Tales of a Cartoonist Lady Person.

Dami: Yep.

Luvvie: So yeah, thank you so much for joining me and where can people find you online?

Dami: You can find me on Instagram. It's my name [Dami Lee](#).

Luvvie: All right, y'all. Follow Dami.

Dami: All right.

Luvvie: And I'll keep following your work. Looking forward to more books from you.

Dami: Thank you so much. This was so much fun.

Luvvie: Indeed.

Dami: All right.

Luvvie: Bye.

Dami: Bye.

Shout out to Dami Lee for joining me. Y'all can follow her on social media. She is [@Dami_Lee](#) on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#). That's D-A-M-I_L-E-E. And also her book is really good. Y'all should pick it up. It is called [Be Everything at Once: Tales of a Cartoonist Lady Person](#). It's really good.

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