



Rants and Randomness with Luvvie Ajayi

Trust Your Gut (with Lisa Price) - Episode 21

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My peoples, welcome to Rants and Randomness. I'm Luvvie Ajayi, your Side-Eye Sorceress, and this is my podcast, where I'm talking about things I'm loving, things I'm side-eyeing, and interviewing really interesting people.

I'm here at the Chicago Recording Company, bringing you all the radio voice as always, and on this episode, I'll be talking about what happened when I went to Paris a couple of weeks ago, ranting about these wasters who come in our inboxes, these time wasters, and spotlighting [The Crayon Case](#). Our guest is [Lisa Price](#), entrepreneur extraordinaire, founder of Carol's Daughter.

It's going to be a good show, so let's jump into it.

Feel Good

[00:00:42]

So, right now, I'm feeling good about my first trip to Paris. I actually went to speak at the [Women's Global Forum](#), and my boyfriend came with me. I had some great food, went to Babylone Bis. I ate a bunch of crepes. I visited the Shakespeare bookstore. Of course, I visited the Eiffel Tower.

But, the really cool thing that happened while I was there is I got engaged. It was a surprise to me. I did not see it coming, but that's a story for another day. One day I will tell you all the full engagement story. Just know I was very surprised, and he did very good.

I struggled with what I was going to share it on social media, but I realized people will see the ring, so I decided to share it. And, when I did, I was completely overwhelmed with the congratulations and well wishes. You all, I got something like 51,000 likes on the Instagram post where I now sit, and 8,700 comments.

Why it was hard for me to share was because it was the first time I'd ever made a public statement about my personal life in this way. I am a real G who moves in silence, and I typically don't share that part of my life on social because I wanted to have it as something that's just for me. So, it was the first time I'd done anything remotely close, and people celebrated so loudly. It was the best feeling.

But, it was really weird because it was the most likes, anything I've ever done got. When I got the New York Times Bestseller, you all didn't even show this much love. But, I think people just need love right now, want affirmations. So, it was really cool.

It just feels good because it's a new stage in my life. It is daunting for me. It is really a moment for me to be like, "Yo ... okay. All right. I guess I'm a semi-grownup because I'm actually choosing to merge my life with somebody else's." Yeah, man. It's really cool to revel in love, to have our friends cheer us on. My friends showed up three hours after we got back from Paris. One of my friends sent us a bucket of chicken in celebration. That's how you know your friends are good friends. They send you chicken to celebrate your good news.

It was just really cool. Our families were excited. So, now begins wedding planning, which ... Lord bless it. Weddings are expensive! I mean, I knew it already, but Lord, they are expensive. Either way, I'm going to not worry about that right now. I'm going to just revel in the good times.

Rant

[00:03:25]

Now, my rant this week, you all ... It's about people sending nonsensical emails and DMs. Now, what I mean by nonsensical ... We've had email at this point for probably 20 years. I thought we all knew that emails were really to get your point across and not to waste people's time. But, apparently, we don't.

I've gotten more than a couple emails and DMs and instant messages that just says, "Hi." Just "Hi," or "Hello," or "Hey," and the person says nothing else. I'm always like, "What did this person want me to do with this message?" Because here's the thing: Are you saying hi just to get my attention? Why don't you state your purpose?

I just want people to understand. If you ever want to send somebody an email or a DM with simply the word "Hi" or "Hello," I need you to stop yourself and then slap yourself for wasting their time. Because you want the person to say, "Hey" back. Why? Just say what you want. "Hey, my name is ..." Or, "Hey, I was wondering this." Give me something to respond to. A "Hi" is not anything for me to respond to. It is not an email.

It's not like we're on the street and passing each other with a quick "Hi" and going on about our business. You want somebody to engage with you, so you dropping in a "Hi" ... It's a time waster. Say, "Hi," and state your business. What do you want?

That sounds all mean when you're like, "Yo, what do you want?" But, I've done that before, where somebody just ... a stranger, emailing me a "Hi." And, I was like, "This is not spam because this email looks right. What do you want? State your purpose."

Listen, I posted this on Twitter and Instagram, and so many people were like, "Yo, thank you. Thank you for that because this is annoying." It is a waste of time. I need us to use our time better. I need us to be more efficient. All these enemies of efficiency ... Instead of us going back and forth because you said, "Hi," and I got to come back with "Hello," say, "Hi," say what you need, tell me what you need from me, so then my email to you can also be comprehensive. I don't even understand. I do not understand.

To the fact that we still have to talk about email etiquette in 2018, that disappoints me because after all this time that we've all had emails, why do we still not have an understanding? The one thing I'm learning recently is just that we don't have a mutual understanding about anything. None of us can agree on one thing about anything, but all I know is this one thing is a very quick way for me to block somebody because I'm like, "Okay ..."

It's the equivalent of somebody tapping on your shoulder as opposed to saying what they want. Do not be a professional time waster. I want more for you. I want you to want more for yourself. I want more for me, and more importantly, I want you to want more for my inbox. Do better.

Randomness Spotlight

[00:06:16]

So, on this episode, I want to spotlight [The Crayon Case](#). The Crayon Case is a cosmetics brand created by internet star and businesswoman Reynell Supa Steward. She's also known as [Supa Cent](#). You might know her from a bunch of her viral videos. She's hysterical. She's been doing just random videos on Facebook for years. A lot of them would go viral, and I'd see her, and I'd laugh at her commentary. She's from New Orleans, so her accent is dope.

Well, the thing is, Supa has taken her audience and now created a mega-business that allows her to feed her family and employ people in her community and people in her family, too. The Crayon Case offers makeup products with a really cute school theme. It's geared towards amateur makeup users and aspiring makeup artists, so you don't have to be a pro. The price point is low, so anybody can afford it, and she has an eyeshadow set called [Box of Crayons](#). She has a setting powder called [Chalk Dust](#).

The cool thing about her is she's also very transparent about her journey. As she's building Crayon Case for the last couple of years, she's shared how she built it from ... I think she started in her house, to now she has a giant warehouse where they ship out things.

Well, The Crayon Case came into everybody's minds on Cyber Monday because Supa started offering the Box of Crayons, and I think Chalk Dust launched that day. I'm not sure. But, she posted on her Insta Stories ... No. On her Instagram timeline video of her watching all the orders come in on her phone. I'm talking every second, there was a ping on her phone. And then, at the end of 90 minutes, after she launched the sale that day, she had made a million dollars.

Yo. Let me say that again. This woman made a million dollars in 90 minutes selling makeup to people who look like her, giving them what they want, giving them an affordable price point. A million dollars. Who made a million dollars on Cyber Monday who was not a massive company? So, I have to give props to this company because, one, Supa's journey is a testament of what happens when you, one, work hard, two, are really transparent and just authentic about your journey, and three, also prioritize customer service.

One thing that Supa shares all the time is how people tweet to her that they just ordered their product, and two days later, it is in their hands. She talks about how she employs people in her family who are skilled, like her sister's her head of HR. So, it is now a family business.

It's really cool to see her success because we're in a space now where you can build a career that does not need permission from anybody. You can build a career from your own home, and you can really become lucrative from doing the thing that you love and standing in a gap, in a place where you think people are missing something.

Her building Crayon Case to this point ... Yo, it's a study. I tweeted ... I need Forbes, Fast Company, Inc., to start featuring people like Supa. She's a black woman who is now a multimillionaire because she built this company from scratch. That's the type of person I want to see on the cover of Fast Company.

I hope they understand that we do not, of course, need their validation. We don't need their stamp to know we're doing dope things. But, I think she deserves all the props. She deserves the spotlight, and what she's done with The Crayon Case should be studied. I'm talking, this is something that people need to really watch and see how she's built this thing.

So, I'm really happy for Supa. Check out her products. TheCrayonCase.com is her website. If you're still doing your holiday shopping, consider picking something up from her website. Her story is just interesting, and the fact that the things that she's doing is so community oriented also makes me want to root for her even more. I want her to win even more, so she can have more million-dollar days.

Her Instagram, if you want to follow it, is [@supa_cent](https://www.instagram.com/supa_cent). It's just interesting. She's hilarious. She shares her family stories, and then she shares The Crayon Case stuff. So, follow them. The Crayon Case is [@thecrayoncase](https://www.instagram.com/thecrayoncase) on Instagram, and I think they're on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/supa_cent), too. Definitely check it out.

This episode of Rants and Randomness is brought to you by the folks at [ThirdLove](http://ThirdLove.com). ThirdLove offers the perfect fit by using millions of real women's measurements to offer you the perfect size with cups from A through H and bands up to 48. I have one. It's really comfortable, too.

The people at ThirdLove found that 50% of women fall in between standard cup sizes, so they invented half cup sizing and have a total of 70 sizes. So, they got something for you. They also offer a 100% fit guarantee. So, if you don't love their product for some reason, returns and exchanges are free and easy.

ThirdLove knows there's a perfect bra for everyone, so right now, they are offering my listeners 15% off your first order. If you go to ThirdLove.com/Rants now to find your perfect fitting bra, you can get 15% your purchase. That's ThirdLove.com/Rants for 15% off.

Interview with Lisa Price

[00:11:54]

Luvvie: Lisa, thank you so much for joining the show.

Lisa: Thank you.

Luvvie: Oh, my goodness.

Lisa: I'm honored.

Luvvie: You are amazing. I am so glad you are on Rants and Randomness. I've wanted to have you on. You are incredible, and I want to give people your bio to kick us all off.

With \$100, her own kitchen, and a determination to follow her dream, Lisa Price, founder of [Carol's Daughter](#), grew her beloved hobby of creating fragrances, creams, and oils into a multimillion-dollar beauty empire. In 1994, she founded Carol's Daughter, which is lovingly named for her mother. Initially, she started off with a handful of steady customers. Those numbers grew in leaps and bounds as women outside her neighborhood and circle of friends began to take notice.

Most recently, Lisa's been appointed as a member of the National Women's Business Council, an independent source of advice and policy recommendations to the president, Congress, and the US Small Business Administration, on economic issues that face female business owners.

Lisa's won so many awards, you all. This lady's epic. Among them, the National Black MBA Association's Entrepreneur of the Year Award, Working Woman magazine's Entrepreneurial Excellence Award, Cosmetic Executive Women's Achiever Award, and more.

She is the author of [Success Never Smelled So Sweet](#), a memoir that chronicles her transformation from a young black woman deep in debt and burdened by low self-esteem, to the present, of a multimillion dollar business. And, she just recently celebrated 25 years of Carol's Daughter. Lisa, welcome.

Lisa: Thank you. Thank you.

Luvvie: So, I always want to know. What did you want to do or be when you were growing up?

Lisa: When I was young, I would say maybe about age 11 or 12, I wanted to be like Diana Ross. I wanted to sing and act. I just fell in love with her when she was Billie Holiday, when she played in Lady Sings the Blues. That's what I thought that I wanted to do.

I did go to High School of Music & Art. I was a voice major. But, when it came time to go to college, my parents really weren't interested in me pursuing music and drama as a major. So, I didn't get to do that. I did get to be a singer for a little while, but it didn't really work out. So, I sing at home, and that's good enough now.

Luvvie: I bet your shower albums be bomb. So, what did you major in, in college?

Lisa: When I was in college, I majored in pre-law because that's what my father wanted me to do. It didn't work out. I started college really, really early. I graduated from high school a month after my 16th birthday, and-

Luvvie: Wait. Wait.

Lisa: ... I got-

Luvvie: Let's talk about that.

Lisa: Yeah.

Luvvie: How did that happen?

Lisa: I was in a junior high school that was kind of progressive, so they just basically put you where you could work. I got skipped two grades while I was in junior high school. So, I started high school at 12.

Luvvie: What?

Lisa: Yeah.

Luvvie: And, then you finished at 16?

Lisa: Yeah.

Luvvie: So, then, did you start college immediately?

Lisa: I did. I was in a special program. City College had this accelerated program where you could get your bachelor's degree and your juris doctorate in six years instead of seven. All my father kept talking about was, "You'll be 22 years old, and you'll have a law degree, and you could do whatever you want. You could pursue music, and if it doesn't work out, you have a law degree to fall back on."

But, I didn't want to be a lawyer. I was only 16, so trying to ... excuse me ... juggle college courses with pre-law courses, it was just too much for a 16-year-old to manage. Unfortunately, I ended up dropping out. I didn't even finish school. I went from being this super great student and this accelerated student and getting skipped and all this kind of stuff, to being a dropout.

Luvvie: How did that work? Did you drop out immediately, or was that a couple years after?

Lisa: It was about a year. First, it was out of the law program because my grades weren't high enough to sustain it. And then, I just tried regular school. It was after about a year, and it was something that ... I understand it so much better now because I'm older. I just didn't know how to process it because I had always been perfect at school. I didn't know how to process failure, and I

equated success with, well, this is why they love me, because I do well. So, when I didn't do well, I didn't know how to process it, and I didn't know if I was going to be loved.

Luvvie: Wow. How did your parents react to you dropping out?

Lisa: My dad was ... Well, I mean, they were both disappointed. I'm 56 years old, so the style of parenting was very different in the '70s than it would be today. There was disappointment and almost like a how-could-you-do-this kind of thing. Because parents at that time, and especially African-American parents, where we all have to be better than everyone else, you have to work twice as hard-

Luvvie: Twice as hard.

Lisa: ... to get half as much ... There was just really no tolerance for ... It was too much for me. I didn't know how to do it. I mean, I think people would be more empathetic today, but then it was just we don't understand what's going on. This is not like her. This is so strange. They didn't know what to do. They thought that the way to manage it was to make me feel embarrassed about what I had done and that what I had done was shameful. It was a difficult time, I think, for them, as well as for me.

What I ended up learning from it, and it took a long time ... I mean, there were decades when I did not even want to walk onto a college campus because I would have this guilt feeling after. But, what I learned from it is when I became a mom, I decided that with my children, I would focus more on the entire person and not this perfection thing of a certain grade.

I didn't want anybody to feel like they didn't have to work hard because then that wouldn't be reality, and it wouldn't be life. But, I was more interested in did you do the best that you could do, or did you dial it in? And, if the best that you could do was a 75, I'm good, because I'm not going to make you feel less than because you couldn't bring home a 94.

I have one son who is dyslexic, and he struggled to get really great grades, but he ended up with an overall average in high school in the high 80s. And then, I have another son who was a National Honor student. My daughter is in middle school. Sometimes her grades are fabulous, and sometimes they're not so fabulous.

But, the most important thing is, do they have arts that they're doing? Are they participating in sports? Is there community service? Are they happy? I don't want them stressed and maniacal about numbers and grades. I want them to be well-rounded people because my entire focus was the number. I didn't know how to handle when that wasn't perfect.

Luvvie: That's a pretty big fail for a 16-year-old in that a lot of us don't have the opportunity to even fail that big at that age. How did you recover from the disappointment? How did you recover and figure out, okay, this is what I'm going to do next?

Lisa: For me, it was a pretty dark time because the way that I dropped out was I just wasn't going. But, I didn't tell anybody that I wasn't going. So, I was hiding in my house, pretending to leave, and waiting until everyone was gone off to work, and then sneaking back into my own house,

and laying low in my house. Eventually, I got discovered because that's how the universe is. You have to face things. You can't hide from things.

I just had a lot of shame around it, and it really just took growing up and going through life and becoming a parent, and just understanding this is where my parents were when they were making this decision. Wow. This must've been so hard for them. They had so much to deal with, things you just can't comprehend at 16 and 17. But, for a long time, I carried it around like it was shame, and I didn't want to talk about it.

I know now I was too young to have made a lifelong decision. I know now that I needed to have passion behind what I was doing in order to be successful. I didn't want to be a lawyer. My dad wanted me to do that. My dad thought that looked good for him if that was what I did.

I don't even look at that in a negative way with him because I understand what that meant at that time, and I understand that they always wanted us to do well because it was how you were going to survive. I don't have any animus or negative feelings, and I'm quite comfortable on college campuses today. It's not something that I feel ashamed of anymore. But, at the time, I honestly didn't know how to deal with it, and I just viewed it as a major failure.

Now I'm actually proud of myself because I understand now that it was a difficult thing that I did. It was a difficult thing to go through. It was a courageous thing to admit that I didn't know how to do it, and I came through it a stronger person. I didn't get to finish school, but to not have that shame anymore, I know that was hard work to get through that.

Luvvie: I mean, a lot of people will go through life and become those lawyers and be miserable. You built this career that is, essentially, probably beyond even your own wildest dreams.

So, what did you do next? What was 18-year-old you doing, and how did you become a writer on TV? Because that's what a lot of people don't realize. You ended up working on a TV show.

Lisa: I actually wasn't a writer. That's something that, unfortunately, people misconstrue. I worked with the writers of *The Cosby Show*. I was, I guess the equivalent ... We hated when we were referred to this, but I guess people would look at us as secretaries, even though we were more than that.

Basically, what we did was go into the rooms with the writers when they were writing the scripts. This was before technology that we have today. I'm sure it's done very differently today. But, I would go in, and you would basically take shorthand notes as they acted out the script and worked on the dialogue.

Then you would go back to your desk. You would type up the script, but it was typed in a way that everyone in production could follow it. Electrics are looking for cues. Props are looking for cues. Wardrobes are looking for cues. You would do research on the script. If they wanted to talk about a particular process, like what happens when you go to the DMV, and you've lost your license? You got to call up the DMV and get all the facts, give that information to the writers, so they could accurately write it into the script.

Then, when the show actually gets done, you're in the booth with the director. You're taking notes as the show is happening. You transcribe the script when it's actually recorded because sometimes they go off-script and the editor needs to have a guideline.

There's a lot involved, which is why we used to hate when people would call us secretaries. But, we didn't actually create it. We weren't writers for the script. We were the writers' assistants. Sometimes people flip that. When I say writers' assistant, sometimes they think I said assistant writer.

Luvvie: Ah. Got you, got you, got you. But, how did that leap happen? The Cosby Show, of course, filmed in New York, and you're a New York girl. How did that even become a thing? That's the type of thing that people don't even realize exists as a career.

Lisa: Well, I had a friend who worked on the show, and she worked with the producers. She called me one day. I was an executive secretary for the director of an agency within Health and Hospitals Corporation. So, I had a city job with New York. I had my two weeks of vacation. I had my medical benefits. My family is like, "Oh, this is wonderful. She has a city job. She'll never be fired."

But, I hated it, and I hated my boss because he was very difficult to work with. And, this one particular day, he really, really pissed me off. I made a mistake in a letter that I had typed for him, and he actually balled it up and threw it in my face.

Luvvie: Wow.

Lisa: I confronted him, which was something that was not in my character to do. I said to him, "I understand that I made a mistake in your letter, but I don't make mistakes. Everyone is entitled to one. I'm not allowed to ball up a letter and throw it in your face. You should not be allowed to throw one in mine. That was over the top and unnecessary. Here's your corrected letter."

Luvvie: Yes!

Lisa: He did apologize. He apologized for throwing the letter in my face, but I went back to my desk, and I said, "That's it. I can't work for somebody like this." I took out my resume. I updated everything on my resume, and I was about to send it to wherever we would send it for jobs within New York City so that they can transfer me to something else.

My friend calls me, and she says, literally, as the resume is coming out of the printer ... It's printing, and the phone rings. "Send me your resume right now. Here's the fax number. We have an opening here, and you'd be perfect for it."

I was like-

Luvvie: Yeah. Look at God.

Lisa: ... "An opening for what?" And then, she tells me, and I was like, "Do you really think I can do that job?"

She said, "Do you know how to take notes?"

I said, "Yeah."

She said, "Do you know how to type?"

I said, "Yes."

She said, "Are you a good speller?"

Lisa: I said, "Yeah."

She said, "You can do the job."

Luvvie: Yes!

Lisa: So, I faxed her my resume, and she sent it to the department that was doing the hiring. The interesting thing was when I went for the interview ... I didn't know any of this until after I got the job, but there were two people who were responsible for hiring me.

One person wanted me because I wasn't a television person. Typically, you don't work in television production unless your end game is to be a writer or be a director or stage manager or something. They pretty much don't let outsiders in. The other person wanted me exactly for that reason. She says, "I want somebody who can type. I want somebody who can take notes, and I want somebody who isn't trying to win an Emmy. I just want them to come in here and work. We need someone who's just going to work."

And so, that person won. She said, "Okay. I'll let you hire her, but if she doesn't work out in the first 10 days, she's out of here," because it's a difficult pace to keep up with. The other person assumed that I was a nine-to-five chick, and I wasn't going to make it with the long hours of TV production.

But, *The Cosby Show* was my favorite show. I knew the dialogue by heart. I knew the characters by heart. I was honored to be able to work there, and I actually loved it because it was creative, but I didn't have the pressure of being the front person who's doing the creating. I got to be a part of that support team. I could work autonomously, and I didn't have to be micromanaged, which I hated. What I learned later was that I was being groomed to be an entrepreneur. But, I didn't realize that's what was happening in that moment.

The other thing that I learned was it was the first job that I had where it wasn't a job because I really loved it. Even though I worked 20 hours a day, and I worked holidays, and I worked Saturdays, and sometimes I worked Sundays, I didn't care because I loved it. So, I got to experience what it felt like to do what you love and to know what that feels like and to know the difference between doing what you love and doing a job.

Luvvie: There's a couple of lessons in that because, one, it's the right timing ... the fact that your resume was coming out the printer, and then your friend calls you. And, two, the fact that they were

looking for, essentially, you. Because you were the person who didn't have the experience and they actually wanted that. You stepped in there and was excellent, so you actually, essentially, proved your friend right and didn't embarrass her for the opportunity she essentially presented to you.

Lisa: Right. And then, I became the show bible because ... So, at all of these types of shows, they keep a bible, especially when the show is on for many years because you might want to reference back and say, "Oh, Clair's sister is coming to visit." But, if in season one, you said she's an only child, then her sister can't come to visit. And, you don't always the same writers, so they don't necessarily remember these things.

So, apparently, Rudy's actual name was not written in the bible. Everyone else's was in the bible, but they just had Rudy Huxtable. But, there was actually an episode where she wrote a book, a storybook that she did for school, and then the show was the family acting out the book in an animation style. And, she says the name of the book, and she says, "Written by Rudith Lillian Huxtable."

So, somebody comes out of the writer's room, and they say, "Does Rudy have a middle name?" And, somebody goes and checks the bible, and they're like, "No, there's no middle name."

I said, "Her middle name is Lillian." And they're ... "No, it's not in the bible."

I said, "Her middle name is Lillian."

Luvvie: Wow.

Lisa: "But, it's not in here."

"I get you, but go back to season whatever whatever, when she writes the storybook ... I don't know what the show is called, but somebody in archives will know. Her name is Rudith Lillian Huxtable."

They went and pulled the archives, got the show, popped it in, and the writers were like, "I'll be damned. That's her name."

Luvvie: Yes!

Lisa: From then on, they never asked the bible. They just said, "Lisa, what's Theo's middle name?"

Luvvie: Wow!

Lisa: I'm like, "Aloysius."

"Thank you."

They didn't even doubt me. They didn't even check. They were like, "Nope. She knows. She knows this show."

Luvvie: Wow, that is amazing. I love that about you because people don't know this about you.

Lisa: Yeah, yeah. It's the non-beauty stuff, and it's the non-entrepreneur stuff, but-

Luvvie: I think that is so interesting.

Lisa: ... we all have those stepping stones that get us to where we are.

Luvvie: But, that type of, absolute, encyclopedic memory has to be a gift because when you're running your own company, there's so many things to keep in mind. So, the fact that you can consume all this information and know it ... You're basically the Jeopardy of The Cosby Show. That is amazing! I never knew that about you. People always talk about you as the beauty guru. No. Yo, she's a TV guru, also!

How many years did you work there?

Lisa: I worked there for the last two seasons of the show. And then, I went on to work on ... Malcolm had a show after that. It wasn't really a spinoff because the production company that did The Cosby Show wasn't interested in the idea that Mister Cosby had for Malcolm's show. So, they basically made a whole new character, and I think it didn't work because the world knew him as Theo Huxtable. They couldn't see him as somebody else so soon after the show.

So, that show was short lived. We were only in production for about four or five months, and then it was canceled. But, I stayed in television production until February of 1996. I had already started Carol's Daughter in '93, but I was pregnant with my first son. I needed to go on maternity leave, and I decided that I was just going to stop working because I realized that between trying to do the business, and if I continued to work, and now I'm adding into it I'm a mom of a newborn, I basically would just hand my paycheck to a babysitter.

Luvvie: Right. Yep.

Lisa: So, instead of doing that, I said, "Well, let me try staying at home, and working the business from home, and being a mom, and see how that goes." That was when I stopped working for someone else.

Luvvie: So, you've been working for yourself for 20 ...

Lisa: That was in '96-

Luvvie: '96 ... 22 years.

Lisa: ... so for 22 years. But, I mean, technically, now I'm an employee of L'Oréal. Technically, on paper, I'm an employee because I'm a part of L'Oréal USA now. But, I still function like an entrepreneur in how I do business and how I live my life. So, on paper, I'm an employee, but I've been an entrepreneur for so long that I don't think of myself as any other way.

Luvvie: Yeah. Let's talk about how Carol's Daughter started. At this point, you're in New York. You're working in television. What made you decide to start mixing butters in your kitchen?

Lisa: Well, I felt like because I had this job that I loved, I wasn't the person who was coming home from work on the weekend, like, "Oh, thank God it's the weekend, and I don't have to be at that horrible place." So, I was just more creative. I was more relaxed, and when I had time off, I wasn't miserable and starved for friendship or socializing. Work was great, so I just started this experimentation.

I just remember one day I was thinking about how my moisturizers never work, and maybe there's a way that I can make something by hand that actually works on my skin. I didn't know how to do it. I didn't know where I was going to get the information.

I went out with my husband. We went to Park Slope on a Sunday. We were just walking around in Park Slope, and we walked into this New Age bookstore, and I found this book on essential oils.

I've always been a person who is obsessed with fragrance. At that point, I was actually blending oils and making my own fragrances, and I was trying to add them to moisturizers that I would buy at the drugstore. It just didn't work. They separated. They were messy, and I just couldn't get it quite right.

And, when I was in this New Age bookstore, there was a book about essential oils and aromatherapy. I've always loved fragrance, but I didn't know what that was. I was like, "What is aromatherapy? What are essential oils?" I started to read in-store, and I said, "You know what? I'm going to get this book. This is really interesting."

Inside of the book, there were basic recipes on how to make a massage oil, how to make a salve if you had a cut or a scrape. From playing around with these basic recipes and then adding other things to it ... like you read in a beauty magazine, jojoba oil does this. I had been to Senegal when I was 19 years old, and I knew how great shea butter was. So, let me find some shea butter. And, I love cocoa butter. Let me get cocoa butter and add it to this recipe that just has three ingredients, but let me make it five and see what happens.

It was just an experimentation kind of thing, a hobby thing, like a weird craft that I got into. I never thought of it as being a business. It was a hobby for maybe about four or five years, and then my mother just said to me one day, "Saint Mary's is having a flea market on May 25th. You should get a table and sell your butters."

I would make butters, and I would give them to friends and family as gifts. Or, "Hey, I just cooked up this batch, and it's more than I'm going to use, so you can have the rest of it."

She says, "People always give positive feedback on it. It makes everybody's skin feel good. It smells good. You should sell it. You should get a table, and sell it, and see what happens." That was the beginning of it being a business.

Luvvie: Wow. And, how did that flea market go?

Lisa: Oh, I sold out. I made a small batch on my stove the night before. I packaged everything into baby food jars, and I made the labels by hand. I think I went out with a couple dozen jars of cream, and I sold them all in that same day. And then, someone gave me a flyer for a craft fair that was coming up in the neighborhood, like two weeks later, and I was like, "Oh, I'm not doing anything. I'm going to do that craft fair."

That whole summer of '93 ... Because back then, television production in New York was very slow in the summertime. Today, we have so many networks, and then you have web series and things like that. People can work in production year-round. But, back then, between May and August, nothing was going on.

So, I was on unemployment. I was available for work if I could find it, and I was cooking product and selling at a flea market or a craft fair or an expo, any place where I could find outdoors that I could sell. I was selling the products, and I was collecting names and phone numbers. When people wanted to replenish, they started to call me. And then, I was like, "Well, I guess you could come to my apartment on Saturday. I'll be home all day Saturday." I unofficially started selling out of my apartment.

Luvvie: Wow. And, you named it Carol's Daughter because your mom is Carol.

Lisa: Yes. Yes.

Luvvie: She gave you the idea.

Lisa: Well, I actually named it Carol's Daughter not because she suggested that I sell for the first time, but because when I was at Cosby, I had gotten a meeting with a person who used to run a salon called [Knaps](#) and [Locks N Chops](#). I think he owned both of them. He was a natural hair pioneer guy in the '90s, when there were two salons in New York that catered to natural hair. He wanted to buy an oil from me, so the actress Erika Alexander, who was on Cosby, was-

Luvvie: Maxine Shaw-

Lisa: ... one of his clients.

Luvvie: ... attorney at law, also.

Lisa: Yes. Yes. She was one of his clients, and I made oil for her that she loved. She smelled something on me one day. She was like, "Oh, that smells good. What is it?"

"Oh, it's just something that I make."

She was like, "Ooh, make me some. Make me some."

So, I made her some oil, and she took it to the salon, and that salon owner wanted to meet me to talk about what I could make for his salon. I know nothing about this kind of stuff, but somebody was like, "Well, you have to have a name. You have to have something. You got to walk in and be like a brand."

So, I made a list of things that I was and a list of things I wanted to become, and one of the things that I was, was Carol's Daughter. I just liked the way that it sounded. Something about it ... It gave me goosebumps and the butterflies in the stomach. So, I was like, "I'm going to call it Carol's Daughter."

I had that meeting with him. I wasn't in a place ... I didn't know where to get jars wholesale. I didn't know anything about that business. We had a very nice conversation, but I couldn't give him exactly what he was looking for at the time. But, that's how I got the name.

I still said Carol's Daughter when I would give it to friends and family. I would just write it on there, but I wasn't actually selling it. When I did the flea market, I was like, "Well, I guess this is the name because that's what I came up with a year ago when I went to meet with that guy. So, I'm going to stick with it."

Luvvie: Wow. I remember ... I don't know what year it was, but when it reached my attention, it was a campaign with Jada Pinkett-Smith, Mary J. Blige. What year was that? Do you remember?

Lisa: That was 2006 and 2007 because we did The Tyra Banks Show in '06, and Mary and Tyra ... I'm sorry. Mary and Jada did the show with me. And then, Mary joined the brand as a spokesbeauty, and we shot Mary and Jada together in '07.

Luvvie: So, how did you even get to that point from, now I'm giving it to my friends, it's selling out at the flea market, to that?

Lisa: So, from the flea market ... It was flea markets and my apartment. Then it was my apartment mostly, and I would only do certain fairs and expos in summer and holiday, because I started to learn which ones were the heavy hitters and where I was going to get the most bang for my buck.

Then I ended up moving into a house. My husband and I bought a house. I was able to have more of an actual store inside of my house, so I sold out of my home for six years. After six years, I was able to get my first store. When I got my first store, I received more press.

I did get press while I was in my house, but it was a bit more niche. Because I had a storefront, there was more press. I was able to get on The Oprah Winfrey Show through word of mouth. And then, that word of mouth led to an investor hearing my story and not believing that it was that story. He's like, "Come on. In her kitchen in Brooklyn? Naw, naw. This is some big brand that's trying to sell us a tall tale. I'm going to go find out."

He did his research, and someone that he knew was one of my customers, and she connected us. He met me and realized ... Oh, wow, this is real. This chick really is in Brooklyn. This is a cool story. He had the vision to see that this wasn't a woman in Brooklyn making products. This was a beauty company, and this was something that could be bigger than what it was.

What I liked about him when I met him was he understood what being an entrepreneur meant. This was when I first met [Steve Stoute](#). He's a marketer and an entrepreneur of his own right. Hugely successful person ... started out in music, went from music to advertising, from

advertising to his own marketing agency. Now he's trying to rule the world. But, just really, really smart and can always see five steps ahead.

We began to work together in 2004. He put together our investment team, and our investment team included Jada and Will, Jay-Z, Mary. His thought process was, don't just have them associated with the brand or figure out how to pay them to speak well of the brand. Have them be a part of the brand, and invest in it, and speak to it from the perspective of a person who has skin in the game.

Will and Jada were users of the brand because they had been introduced to it through friends. So, it was something that they were happy to do. Jay was not familiar with the brand as far as using the products, but his mother was. And, I heard that Beyoncé had heard about it as well and told him, "Oh, yeah. I know that stuff. It's really great." And, he liked the fact that I was from the same neighborhood in Brooklyn.

So, it was through Steve that those people became a part of the brand, and then, having them be able to speak on our behalf helped us to cut through a lot of steps. I might not have been able to get Vogue magazine to write about me or write about my products, but Vogue magazine was happy to write about Jada Pinkett-Smith investing in this brand.

Luvvie: I think about how people take for granted how big natural hair is now. What do you see has been the major shift? Because you started back when it was not cool to be talking shea butter. People would probably be more skeptical than not.

Lisa: Oh, yeah.

Luvvie: How has that shift happened?

Lisa: I remember when people would look at the labels and they would say, "Shea butter? What is that? What am I supposed to do with that?"

Luvvie: Shea butter ...

Lisa: Yeah. You did have a niche group of people who were doing natural hair styles since the late '80s and '90s, but they were very specific. They were like the people that you met at the African dance class that happened at the armory or something in your neighborhood. It wasn't the person that you went to church with. It wasn't your cousin. It was a really small group of people, and then that group just began to expand and expand.

So, it was very, very difficult in the beginning if you were outside of those niche circles, trying to explain the products to people. I think that's why at that time, our body care was more popular than our hair care, because our body care could speak to anybody, but the hair care was more specific.

What I think was the catalyst for change, and this is just my opinion from living through it and watching it, was when Chris Rock's movie came out, [Good Hair](#). People saw the can of Coca-Cola

dissolve in the relaxer solution. That was a wake-up call for a lot of people, like, oh, my God. That's why I'm putting on my hair. Because we never-

Luvvie: What?

Lisa: ... thought of it that way. You were going to the beauty parlor, and you were getting your hair done, and it's what you did for your whole life. This put it into a different perspective.

The other thing that happened at that same time is YouTube begins to explode, and it explodes with college students. So, students are away at school. They're not near their hairdresser. They can't go to the lady that's pressed their hair or relaxed their hair for their whole lives. They're at school. What are they going to do?

Then they see this film. Oh, my God. This is horrible. I don't want to put this on my hair. What can I do? They go to YouTube to see what other people are doing. They hear about protective styles. They hear about a big chop. They hear about braids. A lot of them started braiding their hair because they could get their hair braided when they were at home, go back to school, not have to worry about their hair, go home, get their hair braided again.

And then, after a while, they have this new growth. What do I do with it? I'm going to go on YouTube. What are people doing? This whole community was developing on YouTube. So now, people who didn't used to have a solution other than the relaxer have these resources. This is the product that I use. This is how I style it. This is what I do after I wash it.

If you have access to the marketing data in 2009, 2010, and 2011, there is a tremendous drop-off in the sale of relaxers. Like, ridiculously large. I believe ... Again, this is just me living through it, and it's how I observed it ... [Good Hair](#), I believe, was '09. The rise of YouTube was between '09 and 2010. And then, you see the falloff in those three years, and it's pretty damn dramatic how big it is. People just found another solution and another way to do it.

And then, after that, the retailers are seeing that their sales are dropping off, so they're like, "What the hell? What's going on?" In 2009-2010, there's a change at Target. We had the multicultural aisle. In that aisle was Shea Moisture, and in that aisle was Jane Carter, and in that aisle was Mixed Chicks. I believe Kim Kimble was a part of that. And Miss Jessie's. It was the first time that a Target store was getting \$30 for a product because Miss Jessie's was in there at \$30 and \$40. Target was like, "Are you kidding me? I'm actually-

Luvvie: And, people are buying it.

Lisa: Yeah. So, it was a very dramatic change in how people viewed the industry and looked at haircare. But, my opinion? It was a combination of Good Hair and YouTube.

Luvvie: Wow. Have the numbers recovered or not? Did people stay on the natural, or was it just a trend?

Lisa: Oh, no. They've stayed on the natural. The last time that I saw relaxer data in a marketing document, I believe the data was from '06, and 90% of African American women relaxed their hair in 2006. That number is about 26% today.

Luvvie: What? Are you serious?

Lisa: Yep.

Luvvie: That's incredible. That is a major culture shift in a decade.

Lisa: Oh, yeah. Absolutely. Absolutely. It's completely different, and it's clearly not a trend because the number is starting to level off, but it has not stopped declining. It just hasn't declined sharply. Since I've been tracking it, I remember it being at 30. Then it was 29. This past year, it's at about 26. So, there's no sharp drops, but it's not going back up.

Luvvie: That is amazing. How does it feel to be ... Because you were a part of that. I remember when I first went natural. I think I went natural back in college ... 2009? [Carol's Daughter](#) was one of the first products I bought. I spent my little college coins and my favorite was the ... hair spray, like one of the moisture sprays that smelled really good. Tui, vanilla? One of those.

Lisa: There was Tui, and there was Black Vanilla.

Luvvie: [Black Vanilla](#). Yes.

Lisa: There was two. Yeah.

Luvvie: The [Black Vanilla](#) was my joint because it also smelled so fragrant that I didn't have to wear a perfume when I sprayed it in my hair.

Lisa: Okay.

Luvvie: I actively remember that being one of the first natural hair products that I bought, and I used it for years.

Lisa: Wow.

Luvvie: How does it feel when you realize you were part of this shift, this cultural moment?

Lisa: It's very interesting because there's the part of it, of course, where you're amazingly proud. It's very interesting to watch it and to see it and to know the part that you played in pushing it in that direction. I don't mean that from the perspective of I'm going to take all of the credit for it. But, I know things that I did, I was the first to do it, and I know that helps open the door for the next person.

Sometimes it's frustrating because now I'm in this environment of competing with so many different companies and brands that learned from me, but because they learned from me so

many years ago, I almost look like the me, too, because you don't remember who came first. Do you know?

Luvvie: Yeah.

Lisa: Like when someone remixes a classic record, and the younger generation thinks that's that person's song. They remix something from 20 years ago, and the original artist isn't talked about in the conversation.

That's something that can be frustrating, but you have to go with it because I feel like my role was to be that leader and that change maker, and not to be the best, and not to be number one. When you're charged with leading and making changes, you have to make the sacrifice that you may not have the best sales, and you may not be number one, and someone else may overtake you because your focus is a bit different.

In leading, you're making way, and you're moving things, and you're translating, and you're changing thought processes, and you're developing language, and you're creating vernacular. You can't be focused on, well, I'm going to be number one, and I'm always going to be the best, and I always want to get the credit. That's not what's going to happen.

And then, I also recognize that part of what I do and what I've represented is that accidental entrepreneur, that person that didn't set out to do this, but figured out how to do it and can do it. You don't have to be from a family of influence to be successful. You don't have to go to college to be successful. You don't have to have everything all figured out to be successful, and you can make mistakes and still be successful. That story and that message is so much more important, particularly to women and particularly to women of color.

Luvvie: What is the singular, I would say, most important thing you think you've learned as an entrepreneur and running this business for all these years?

Lisa: I've learned to trust my gut. I've learned to not be afraid of things that I used to be afraid of, because being an entrepreneur forced me to do things that I was afraid to do. I had the choice of not doing it and not growing a business, or watching it die, or facing the fear and just doing what I needed to do, to get to that next level. Ultimately, I faced the fear and did what I had to do. So, now it can't scare me anymore because I did it.

I feel like the biggest message or maybe the biggest blessing that I've gotten from being an entrepreneur was it forced me to face so many things that I allowed to hold me back because I was afraid. And, now I'm no longer afraid, so those things can't hurt me anymore. I'm a stronger person. I'm a much more confident person, and I don't know how I would've gotten there had I not been an entrepreneur.

Luvvie: Wow. We recently were in ... The last time I saw you was in August because you celebrated 25 years of Carol's Daughter in a very spectacular way. I'm talking the blackest nights ever at the Blacksonian, the African American Museum. It was such a special night. I want you to talk about it, first of all, because Lord, you all have to be there. It was amazing.

Lisa: It really was an amazing celebration and amazing event. I couldn't have chosen a better place or team or anything. There's not one aspect of that night that I look back on and say, "Oh, I wish we had ..." Everything really did work out beautifully.

There was so many things that were so significant. It is our museum, and the brand is actually in the museum. That was something that I didn't even know was a thing until someone sent me a picture from the museum and said, "You're in here." It's not like you apply to get in, or someone calls and says, "Fill out this paperwork, and maybe we'll put you in," or they give you a heads up.

For me, being in the museum, being in an exhibit was this affirmation of, yes, you did this, and you did it well. You were a leader in this space ... not the only, but one of the leaders in this space, and you helped to move this conversation forward.

It exists on the fourth floor of the museum. When you go to the museum, you're supposed to start the exhibit in the basement. The basement is representative of being in the bottom of the slave ships and coming here. It starts with slavery, and you work your way up through the museum. As you get to each level, you walk through slavery, and you walk to freedom, and you walk through civil rights, and you march into freedom.

When you get to the fourth floor, it's celebration. It's celebration of our culture, music and words and art and hair and style and fashion and all of this. So, to be on that fourth floor and to be part of what is celebratory and beautiful about us as a people, I couldn't be honored in any better way ever for as long as I live.

Luvvie: My goodness.

Lisa: That was just remarkable to be able to have the celebration in there, to make arrangements to gather friends and family and honor that legacy, and honor my mother, and honor the people who helped build the company, who, unfortunately, are no longer alive. You're around for 25 years, unfortunately, there is some deaths that occur in a time that long. It was just remarkable and magical and beautiful, and it is definitely one of my treasured memories and one of my favorite nights ever.

Luvvie: It was incredible because there was also a replica of your stoop in Brooklyn that we all sat on and took all the pictures in.

Lisa: Yes. [Karleen Roy](#) was-

Luvvie: She's everything.

Lisa: ... the event planner for that event. I knew that's who I wanted to do it. I just didn't know if I could afford her, and to be honest with you, maybe I couldn't have. Maybe she did some special magic for me because what she did with the budget that I was able to give her was really remarkable. I think she did that project out of love as well, because she's just so phenomenal. I know what my flower budget was. I don't know how she got all those flowers in there.

Luvvie: She is magical.

Lisa: It was just gorgeous. It was so gorgeous, the band and everything she was able to pull together.

People who didn't know that we just planned a really over-the-top, wonderful party, they thought that I had exhibits in the museum. People texted me later, "How long is your living room and stoop going to be up? Because we're going to go back to the museum while we're here for the weekend."

I was like, "Sweetie, those things are gone."

Luvvie: Right.

Lisa: They were so well done that they didn't look like party decorations. They thought they were real exhibits at the museum. It was remarkable.

And, my son, Ennis ... I don't know if you got to meet him that night. He was standing in the re-creation of the flea market, and he had been in the actual flea market business part of things when he was a toddler.

Luvvie: Wow.

Lisa: He stood there, and he said, "Mom, I think I remember this."

Luvvie: Wow.

Lisa: She had recreated it so exactly that it brought back that memory to him when he was four years old.

Luvvie: Oh, my goodness.

Lisa: Yeah.

Luvvie: Oh. Yeah. I met your whole family. Just amazing. I met your husband. Look, it was an amazing night, and it was so deserved, too, because of all the work you've done in 25 years.

I still see you as an entrepreneur even though [Carol's Daughter was acquired by L'Oréal](#). How was that process? Was it hard letting somebody else own the brand?

Lisa: Honestly, it wasn't. I say that because the way that it was built and the way that we were able to grow and do what we did was because we took on investors, and it was because we took on equity partners.

I always knew that at some point, I would have to sell to a strategic partner and then have a relationship with that partner. My goal was to find the right one. It doesn't necessarily work out that way. People who build businesses and then sell them, sometimes they get to sell them to who they want to sell them to, and sometimes they don't.

I was fortunate that I got to sell the brand to a company that I wanted to sell it to because I knew that they understood our consumer. I knew they understood this market. I knew that they would take care of the brand. They also wanted me to be a part of it.

So, even though I sold it to someone else, I'm still here. I've been here for four years since the acquisition, and I still guide the direction. I still develop product. I still go on HSN to sell. I still write the email messages, and I write the copy that's on the package. And, I lead the education that goes on with the brand.

So, being able to still be who I am makes it that much more special. I mean, I guess at some point, I'll retire and want to enjoy my life, since I am 56 years old. I don't want to work forever.

Luvvie: Your black isn't cracking, girl.

Lisa: I tell you. My [face butter](#) is my best friend.

Luvvie: Ooh, yes.

Lisa: But, it's been a joy, and it was not a difficult decision. It was difficult going through that process and dealing with some of the backlash that came from the community because they felt that I had sold out, and I understand why people feel that way. But, I chose to use it as an opportunity to educate and to teach people about business and how business works.

The more businesses we own, and the more that we get to play in this space, the less foreign selling will seem, and people will understand better that it's not about selling out. We feel that way because we don't own enough, but one day, we'll get there. And so, I just continue to educate about that and every now and then, if someone says, "You're a sellout," I'm like, "Okay, have a blessed day."

Luvvie: Have a blessed day as I build my generational wealth. Okay?

Lisa: Exactly.

Luvvie: So, as you're doing all of this, how are you taking care of yourself? What's your self-care routine?

Lisa: I make sure that I exercise. It may not look like it to some people because I don't have whatever that perfect body type is.

Luvvie: There isn't no perfect body type.

Lisa: I work with a trainer three days a week. I try to supplement that with SoulCycle. Sometimes my schedule doesn't allow it. But, at a minimum, I'm with my trainer three days a week.

I became a vegetarian about five years ago, and that has helped. When I go to get my checkups and things like that, I have good blood pressure. I have good cholesterol. I make time for

massages, manicures, and pedicures. They are scheduled the same way I schedule business meetings and school conferences, and they happen on a regular basis.

Luvvie: How often?

Lisa: Manicures and pedicures are once every three weeks. Massages, at a minimum, once a month, but sometimes I go a couple times a month if I can work it in. Facials, I'm bad at, but that's because I have decent skin. I should have facials more often, and I'm going to work on that for the new year because now that I'm getting closer to 60, I think it's more important. But, it's critical.

And then, my bathroom tends to be my spa. With travel and running a business and raising a family, you don't always have time to physically go to a spa, but my bathroom can be my spa. I love taking baths. I'll go into the bathroom with my laptop propped up on something and put on Netflix, and don't bother me for a while. I'm in here chilling.

Luvvie: Yes. I love it. You luxuriate hard.

Lisa: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Luvvie: This is dope.

Lisa: I also knit because I like to be creative. I'm a terrible flyer, so having something to do while I'm flying is really good. And then, I'm always creating. I've learned that's part of how I breathe. I breathe, I eat, I drink water, I create. I always have to create. I love that I've found knitting in the past couple of years.

Luvvie: Yo, that's incredible. I am rooting for you always. I love, love, love what you built. But, more importantly, I love the person that you are. You're so warm. Seeing you win is a win for all of us, Lisa.

Lisa: Thank you. Thank you. And, I very, very much appreciate who you are. I thoroughly enjoy following you. I love when you go on your IG Stories and put people in their place. I just love you and Yvonne together, with [Jesus and ... Is it Jollof?](#) Is it-

Luvvie: Jollof.

Lisa: Is it pronounced Jollof?

Luvvie: Yes, girl.

Lisa: Yes. I love it all. You are just so remarkable. I can't imagine where you're going to be when you're my age because you are just amazing today.

Luvvie: Well, thank you for paving the way for us and making sure that black women entrepreneurs have people to look up to.

Lisa: Okay. Thank you.

Luvvie: Thank you, Lisa.

Lisa: Much love and happy holidays.

Luvvie: Same.

Lisa: Bye bye.

Luvvie: Bye.

Yo, shout out to [Lisa Price](#) for joining me on this show. Please follow her on social media. I love her content. She's @IAMLisaPrice on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#). That's I-A-M-L-I-S-A-P-R-I-C-E.

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See you all on the next episode ... possibly 2019.