



Rants and Randomness with Luvvie Ajayi

Hold Yourself Accountable (with Sophia Bush) - Episode 45

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Yo, my PEOPLE! Welcome to Rants and Randomness. I'm your host Luvvie, New York Times bestselling author, speaker and professional troublemaker, and I'm here to share dope conversations that will give you something to think about, help you smile and feel empowered to do what you feel compelled to do. Let's get into it.

I love this conversation with our guest today. I'm talking to [Sophia Bush](#), and that is my boo. We recorded IG Live on Sophia's Instagram after I took over for her as part of an initiative back in June called [Share the Mic Now](#) where 50 Black women took over the Instagram accounts of 50 white women. We had billions of views on these accounts and it was an amazing experience.

Sophia and I are talking about getting over the paralysis of perfection, speaking up, what spending your privilege looks like and why these conversations about privilege could actually save lives if we're paying attention, and why we gotta commit to standing up for each other in visible ways.

Conversation with Sophia Bush

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SOPHIA So conversations that we're having right now I think are so inspiring to me, and to you, and to so many people in our community because we've been having them for a really long time and it feels like a match got lit and they've gone so global.

I've been really inspired and excited by how many people have said, "I wondered about this," or "I didn't know where to start," or "I didn't know where to look," or "I didn't think about the fact that the algorithms on these websites mean that I only see people who look like everyone I follow or who think what everyone I follow seems to think. I didn't think about that." That has also been really cool. That a lot of people are starting to look around at who they hear from.

I've had a lot of white people recently being like, "How do we have these conversations? How do we not say the wrong thing?" and I'm like, "We're always going to say the wrong thing. Not all the time, but there's a lot that people who look like me don't know. If you expect yourself to be perfect, you expect yourself to never get it wrong, you're not ever going to start.

I think when you get over the nervousness of, "What if I say the wrong thing? What if I do the wrong thing?" and you show up and shut up first and learn and listen and learn how to speak up

... For me it's been really bolstering after all these years running to the front line with issues and traveling with my friends and knowing what a gift it is to have the diverse community that I have, when you guys were like, "Hey, would you be a part of this?" I was like, "Well, shit. I'm not completely doing it wrong, am I? That's so nice. Okay." That was flattering for me too to be asked to be part of this action.

LUVVIE Sophia, you were one of the first names that we actually said. We wanted women who already started to use their voice. It's a testament to your work that you are known for using your voice. You're not just an actress in the way some people try to be, "That's just an actress." No! You're multi-layered and you don't let the things that you're doing professionally stop you from speaking truth to power which is actually more exceptional than the rule.

I think as women we need to allow ourselves to be multifaceted. On some days I'm not talking about what's happening in the news or racism. Some days I'm talking about pure shenanigans. Just ridiculous stuff and foolishness.

SOPHIA Yes.

LUVVIE If that's what's on my spirit, I will talk about that. Other days I'll talk about it. If it's sitting on my heart to talk about it, why not? Allowing us to be multifaceted, we all hear about brands now, right? You're supposed to only talk about one thing. No! We can talk about our lives. We can talk about our jobs. We can talk about our friends. We can talk about our family. We can talk about nothing and we just need to give ourselves that leeway.

SOPHIA We deserve to have the opportunity to be many things on the spectrum from serious to silly. On the spectrum from giving to receiving. I think the more that we can use our platforms and be clear about the full spectrum that we are as women, the more we can give other women permission to do the same.

LUVVIE That's what we have to do every day with our lives. That's why I'm like, "Listen. I will not ever claim perfection." I always tell people, "I don't belong on pedestals. I put that in my intro on your platform yesterday because I need us to also understand in the process of whatever journey that we're in, not being afraid of making mistakes. Perfection, the idea that you're going to be perfect, to your point earlier, it's going to cause paralysis in the way, Boz actually calls it perfection paralysis.

SOPHIA Yes. It's bad.

LUVVIE We always think if it isn't just right. We shouldn't do it. I'm always like, "I'm not going to always do it just right. In fact, expect me to falter. Expect me to make mistakes because I am sometimes a trash human being." My job is to make sure that I'll be less trash tomorrow.

SOPHIA Something that I love too and I've seen this, it's a picture of a tweet, but it's been going around on Instagram a lot. It essentially says, "It's okay to form new opinions when you learn new information that challenges what you used to believe." That I think is so important for all of us to know.

That maybe we were raised a certain way. Maybe we were told something and when we get older we learn that that wasn't a whole truth or perhaps it was an experience that came out of a generational prejudice that we didn't know existed in our community or in our family.

It's always within our scope of the permission that we give to ourselves to grow, and to be better, and to learn more. To truly take in more information and evolve with it, I think that's the goal of being a human. That's the goal of higher education. That's all of it.

LUVVIE Absolutely. I think we do have to constantly commit to growing. Not just giving yourself permission to growing, but being like, "I have to be better." That doesn't necessarily mean you have to do more. It just means you have to do better, right? I know a lot of us are tired. We're like, "Ooh. I've got to do even more?" No. That's not what I'm asking. Just knowing that you growing is not an option. It needs to be an obligation.

You've got to figured out, "Okay. How am I challenging myself today? How am I making sure that I'm not being stuck in the old ways?" Rolling with a crew that will challenge you also will do that, right? I think everybody needs to have friends who are not afraid to be like, "Hey. I see you slipping. What's up?" I think that keeps me on my toes. My friends will tell me if they catch me slipping and be like, "Lovingly, let me tell you why you're slipping." I'm like, "You right. Let me get it together." That's important.

SOPHIA Yeah. I think loving accountability is so important. Right now we have to figure out how to use all types of accountability in our activism. In our families. In our communities.

To your point, Luvvie, in our personal relationships we can show up with tender demands for accountability. When your friends can be like, "I see the thing that you did there where you were being lazy and I know you're better than that," and they're like, "Yeah, okay. Fine."

LUVVIE Yeah. You right.

SOPHIA You're right. Then we figure out what exists in the spectrum in between. As I was referencing earlier and we've heard a lot of people talk about this week, they'll be like, "I didn't know that this thing in my family was so problematic until this came. I didn't know that this was a prejudice in my community until these issues came up."

You can love your family tenderly and demand ferociously that they become accountable. You have the opportunity in a space like that. I say you in the collective, to the audience and to us, we together all have the opportunity to hold mirrors up to people who we love, and that can feel like a fierce action, but when you love someone ferociously, that's your job. It's part of the reason we're on the planet is to do that together. To do that with each other. That kind of stuff feels important to qualify in moments like this. To be able to hold each other to account because we love each other. That feels really important.

Because I love my community, I want to hold crooked cops accountable. Because I love my community, I want to hold our elected officials accountable to actually spend money on healthcare in schools. Because I love my community, I want to make sure that people are being able to access the resources that they so deserve that our taxpayer dollars pay for. Those things

come from love. Those demands of accountability are rooted in real goodness. I think when we really can sit with that, it can inform our activism, and our friendships, and our family relationships, and everything.

LUVVIE

Yeah. I honestly think when we say, "I'm my brother's keeper. I'm my sister's keeper," that's a verb. That's an action that we have to take. I can't be your keeper if you can't trust me with you. Right? I can't be your keeper if you don't think I have your back. We hear these words and you hear village, and tribe, and community, and family. Those mean something and for them to be meaningful words that come with action.

I always want to make sure the people who I am in community with can trust me to hold them accountable and they can hold me accountable. Together we'll be better for it because we all will suffer from a world where we're not showing up as our best self. All of use will suffer. In some way. One person being harmful to somebody else is going to have to have a trickle down effect. I'm just like, "You know what?" Even if you were not somebody who cares about the community, just even selfishly think, "You know what? That thing going wrong could actually effect me." If that could be what motivates you to step up and actually hold other people accountable and hold yourself accountable first, then do that, but we have to start taking that commitment seriously.

If we don't, we'll find ourselves in dumpster fire world. We're looking around, "How did we get here?" and we're like, "It was a series of actions. Actually, a series of inactions. A series of inactions that gets us here." It's always important for us to figure out what we're doing. I think this moment with the COVID of it all, with the unrest of it all, one of my friends Devi Brown calls it a divine timeout.

SOPHIA

Wow. A divine timeout.

LUVVIE

Divine timeout. The universe, God, earth, has set us and literally locked us in the house. You're not distracted. In fact, I'm going to remove everything you're distracted from. Now sit here and figure out what you're supposed to do to fix what's happening. It's kind of like the world grabbed our face because we weren't listening before.

We were not listening before. We had stuff to do. Conferences and whatever. The world stopped and was like, "Hey, everybody, go sit in your house. You can't leave. Okay, now while you're there, what are you going to do?" This is an important moment that we can not take for granted. We've clearly done a lot of trash things to this earth and it's tired of our shit. So now we've got to figure out how to clean up our trash.

SOPHIA

Yeah. I love that. A divine timeout. It really has been a time for people I think to get perspective and to consider why they've behaved the ways that always have or believed the things they've always believed. Where do some of those belief systems come from? Are they antithetical to what we claim to believe in? That can often happen when people are confronted. This idea that, like you said earlier, love thy neighbor. It's like, "Well, do I take care of my neighbors? Do I take care of my community? Do I stand up for other people's children? Is there such a thing as other people's children?"

It's been a really healthy time for reflection. I think it's been so cool to see the impact of that. Like we were saying, even yesterday with all these Instagram takeovers, I was like soccer mom. I was creeping through at anything. "What's everyone saying? What's going on? What's she doing now?" I was so excited. It was just so special to see the positivity and the awakening. I guess I'm wondering was there anything that happened yesterday that really was a standout to you in taking over a new space?

LUVVIE Let me think. Again, your audience was not jarring to me. You've already prepped your audience because you've already used your voice. Your audience is ready to listen. They showed up with great attitude in the comments. Because I was doing this content and I was in the bunker of the planning team, I actually didn't get a chance to watch anybody else's real content, which is why I'm hoping I can go through all the highlights today to catch up on what everybody else is giving and the lives.

I would say I was checking in with everybody who was associated with today. I'm going to be sending emails. I've been sending some text messages just asking people how it felt. Overall people were like, "This is incredible." One of my friends, Tiffany Aliche, she took over Ashlyn Harris' live. She called me today and she was like, "My God. That was amazing." She said Ashlyn's audience was so positive and receptive because what she talked about on the live was how, for example, people would never think about how racism effects everything. Everything. Down to how your house gets appraised.

SOPHIA Yes.

LUVVIE I didn't realize it. She said when her house got appraised, she took the pictures off the wall so the appraiser wouldn't know that she owned the house. A lot of appraisers will appraise your house 20% less than what it's worth just because they know the owner's Black. That was what she talked about on her live to be like, "Yo. Racism goes beyond the knee in the neck." Actually, you build wealth with your home ownership. You start there. Imagine year by year, you're taking a 20% hit strictly because you're Black. The way it has reverberated consequences. Myleik Teele and Cheryl Strayed, their conversation was about being black at the workplace.

So she started inviting people who were in the live to come on and people were sobbing. This one woman comes on and she has two masters degrees, but she gets fired within the year at every job because they always say she's not a "culture fit" because she can't go on the vacations with them. She can't go to happy hour because she has to go home to take care of her child. She can't talk about her summer in the Hamptons, so they never think she's a fit. She's like, "I just want to do good work, but because I'm Black and they can't relate to me, I get fired because it's not a culture fit."

Hearing about those conversations and how it really gives people perspective of the things you never think about unless you've had to deal with it, I'm really hoping that all of the actions yesterday, the voices that got to be on bigger platforms, I really hope it changes and pierces hearts and minds. I want people to start thinking about that. If you're the person at the office who reports somebody to HR because you're like, "They're aggressive in email to me," are they aggressive or are you just not thinking that they're nice enough because they were direct? Meanwhile, that person might get fired the next time somebody else complains. Don't be that person.

SOPHIA Right. It drives me crazy too. I think about it. Obviously I don't have the experience that your friend does of being a Black woman in the professional workplace with two masters degrees who's experiencing this "culture fit" issue, but I know that as a woman in the workplace if I got hot under the collar about something that's happening at work that is clearly not right where a group of people are not being taken care of, where their health is not being prioritized, and I stand up to complain about that on behalf of other people, I get called a bitch.

A man who gets tough about an issue, people go, "Well, he's a ball buster. He's strong. He's a good leader." There's no difference. As a woman, you expect me to be gentle? So if I say, "This is unacceptable. This is dangerous," whatever it is that I say, it turns into something. It turns into you spinning an article that I couldn't handle something. I don't know, let's say a personal experience, whether ... Not true. I stated that something was very dangerous for my coworkers and I was called a bitch because of it. Men don't get called that.

LUVVIE No. No.

SOPHIA When I think about knowing how frustrating that experience is for me, my hope is that instead of being this voting block who has done a trash job. I'm talking to my fellow white ladies out there. We've done a really bad job as a voting block y'all. We got to get it together. We need to vote for our sisters. Period. End of story. Vote like your life depends on it. It does.

When I think about us as a voting block, if any other white woman has understood how frustrating it is to be a woman in the workplace, I want you to double down on committing the women in your workplace who are women of color. Commit to fighting for them. Commit to standing up for them. When someone calls the Black woman angry because of an email, be like, "Don't call her that! That's racist!" because it is.

LUVVIE Because it is!

SOPHIA We have to do better if we're going to stand up for sisterhood. Period.

LUVVIE Here's the thing about Black women at work. A lot of times it's white women who get them in trouble. It's the white women's micro aggressions that get them in trouble.

SOPHIA I know!

LUVVIE It's the white woman who starts crying in a meeting at a Black woman challenging her. I've worked for myself for 10 years. So I'm a consultant. I do a lot of company talks. I have had a conversation with a white woman where I literally told her to make an edit to something and she started sniffing on the phone. I was like, "Hey, can you make this edit." All I heard was ... "Holy shit, is she crying? She's crying."

Imagine if I was maybe working in somebody's office and this person starts crying and somebody's like, "Oh my God, what happened?" "Well, I was having a conversation with Luvvie and she made me cry." "Oh my God, that's not okay." That is how you get people in trouble. I wrote a piece a couple years ago called *The Weary Weaponizing of White Women Tears* to really

talk about how a white woman has to understand that your tears have gotten people in trouble for centuries. Right?

I had people telling stories of how white women tears have gotten them in trouble at work. Endless stories. I've gotten so many messages about that post and I still do. It goes back up and starts trending again whenever Amy Cooper happens. People being like, "Ooh, I feel like I've been that person before, but you just alerted me to it." People don't realize how they act and how it actually does have reverberations through the world. This is why we have got those moments.

SOPHIA I would encourage because there's probably people who are watching this who are hearing you talk about that piece and then feeling uncomfortable. If you're feeling uncomfortable, sit with it. What I would offer is maybe one of those women who started crying in an interaction with another woman in her office has gotten so used to having to be so stern-faced in a room full of a bunch of men who treat us all like shit that with another woman she doesn't realize the woman who she gets upset with also happens to be the you in the room Luvvie.

You have to really be conscientious of what your societally conditioned subconscious, unconscious, not quite aware, whatever you want to call it racism is. That's our job to recognize and I think it's incredibly important too to understand that because we're all so used to having these horrible power dynamics but and large with me, that we make these assumptions that all women's experiences are the same and we don't even know then that we're weaponizing our whiteness against the women of color in the room because we're like, "But we're all women."

That's not the same. If you can understand how subjugated you've been made to feel as a woman and you're a woman who looks like me, you have to wake up to the reality that women who look like you Luvvie and women of color in the workplace have it layered. The difficulty is layered. That's where the term intersectionality comes from, you guys.

LUVVIE That part.

SOPHIA It means that women, like a woman like Luvvie, you are a Black woman. You live at the intersection of being Black and being a woman. I'm giving the white women a lesson obviously. I'm not giving Luvvie a lesson. She knows. We also need to understand terminology properly. You can't be like, "My workplace is intersectional." That doesn't exist. That's not a thing. Your workplace might be diverse. It is not intersectional. Don't use words wrong. I was a journalism student. I want you to know these things. We have to understand whatever our experience is, the women around us who are women of color, and black women in particular, have it with compounding difficulty because of intersectionality. We need to know that.

LUVVIE When you add women who are gay, who are trans, we're at the intersections of four marginalized groups and they're really not heard.

SOPHIA Exactly.

LUVVIE Which is why we all have to figure out what our privileges are because I sit here as a Black woman who I know I still carry so much privilege. I'm straight. I'm cis gendered. I'm not poor. I

have a blue check mark. That in itself is a freaking privilege. I also now have to use my own privilege and make sure I'm not weaponizing my privilege against other people who don't have those same privileges. I'm Christian. I'm educated. I carry so many privileges, so it's also my job to be like, "How do I use my privilege to make sure somebody else is not being subjugated on my behalf?"

My Muslim friend Ipsy Hodge. I have to make sure if we're both together, I have to protect her because if somebody says something about her hijab, I got to stand up for her. I shouldn't expect her to have to speak for herself, which is why everybody in whatever positions you're in have to figure out what your privileges are. You being privileged or somebody pointing out your privilege is not saying you're lazy. It is not saying how you are not deserving of the things that you have. But you have certain things because of certain privileges too.

It's really important for everybody to see their lives like that. You are privileged in some way. You are on a smartphone right now. There are people who don't have smartphones. Who still have flip phones. We don't have to worry about where our food is coming from because we know we'll figure out something. There are people who don't know that. There are people who are like, "I only have one shirt." Meanwhile we're like, "Huh. I should just give away 30 of my stuff," and my closet would still look the same. We have to make sure that every day we're figuring out "How am I using my power, whatever that is, for the greater good?"

SOPHIA Yes. It's so important. I love the way that you phrase it like that. For whatever reason, the term privilege seems like it's a little hot for some people. It's a hot stove. People are like, "I don't want to touch that! I don't want to look at that!" It doesn't harm you to acknowledge the ways in which you're privileged. What it does is it clarifies the ways in which you're lucky or the ways in which you have unearned privileges so that you can then defend people, stand for people, support people, enrich the lives of people who do not. The color of my skin is an unearned privilege in my life.

LUVVIE Correct.

SOPHIA It is only considered a privilege because our society currently lives in a system that was designed by white, heteronormative, cis gendered dudes. I have proximal privilege to that. If I don't recognize that, I'm not only not helping you, I'm not helping myself. Racism doesn't have anything for any of us. It's not good for any of us. It's like a cancer. It's really toxic. That conversation can be hard for people when they first get into the, "How do I recognize my privilege?" stuff.

It's great to I think remind people that it extends everywhere. If you're food secure, that's a privilege. If you have a smartphone, as you said, that's a privilege. If you're in the position to clean out your closet and gives some clothes away, that's a privilege. Know what your privileges are. Figure out which of them you are going to be grateful for and pay forward and figure out which of them you're going to own and then serve out of.

LUVVIE Yes! The thing for people to think about when you think about privilege is think about the things you never have to think about. There's so many things that you've never had to think about. For example, if you go to Walgreens and you need a bandaid, for decades you don't have to think

about your bandaid being skin tone colored. Let me even tell you how it showed up in my life and I knew about privilege and I didn't even realize it.

Speaking we get a lot of over the ear mics, right? I've done so many speaking engagements. I've been a professional speaker.

SOPHIA It's the thing and it goes in the mic.

LUVVIE It comes over, but they have the one that comes near your mouth, right?

SOPHIA Oh, it's like the Britney Spears mic that tapes on like this.

LUVVIE Yes! That one.

SOPHIA I call that a pop star mic.

LUVVIE The pop star mic. I've done a bunch of speaking engagements. For those asking, people were asking before. My book is called I'm Judging You. Go on ahead and buy it. There's a privilege section.

SOPHIA It's so funny.

LUVVIE You read that chapter. I've done a bunch of speaking engagements. I've had the black mic or usually it's a tan mic. Then one day I had one speaking engagement where they came to me beforehand with a mic guy. He lays out five microphones in front of me and he says, "All right. Let's match this to you."

My mouth dropped Sophia. Dropped. I literally was like, "Wait. Wait. These are supposed to match my skin tone?" and he was like, "Yeah. Pick the one that matches." He was like, "Let's see the one. This one." He picked the perfect brown shade microphone for me and I was like, "In all my years of speaking, no one had ever even offered me a skin tone microphone." I didn't know it was supposed to match my skin. I hadn't even thought about it.

I was just mind blown. So this whole time I didn't realize I was being othered even by my microphones and it changed my life. The next time I had a speaking engagement, they had all these mics. All of them were either black or tan. I was like, "Do you have any brown ones?" and they looked at me like, "Huh. No, actually we don't." I was like, "You should get some for the next time. I'll pick the black one because me wearing the tan one is weird, but you should get some brown microphones." They had never thought about it and that is privilege. They never thought about it. It was crazy.

SOPHIA Well, there's a story that I think is so interesting. Let's think about privilege as it works with technology. A lot of engineers, think about shows like Silicon Valley. They get stereotyped as the skinny nerdy cute white guy in a puffy vest in San Francisco. There's a stereotype there, but the stereotype comes from the generalization of the people in that community.

Now, many years ago when automated hand dryers were becoming a thing, which now they are in every bathroom it was a bunch of techy white guys in San Francisco who designed this technology and a Black person went to use an automated hand drier and it didn't turn on. The coding had been done with all these guys in a lab and they didn't even know. It wasn't like it was an intentional thing. This has since been discussed.

They were like, "We didn't even think. We didn't even know that if we didn't code it specifically to recognize African American skin, that if we didn't code it specifically to recognize South Asian skin ... We didn't know. We assumed it would see everyone and the machine couldn't." It couldn't see everyone. You realize the spaces where people literally get left out. Then you think about these modern technologies where self-driving cars are supposed to recognize pedestrians. What if they can't see you? What if they literally can't see you?

LUVVIE They won't! I'm so glad you made that point.

SOPHIA These are huge problems.

LUVVIE Artificial intelligence is now becoming bigger and bigger. Robots are not apolitical. Robots will pick up the biases and the blind spots of those who code them. For AI to become bigger and bigger and they're literally leaving Black and Brown people out is actually dangerous. It will kill us. To your point, if there's a self-driving car ...

SOPHIA Yes. Everyone on this live should look up. There's an incredible woman. She's a scientist at MIT. Her name is Joy Buolamwini. I will link to her TED Talk in my stories. She is an engineer at MIT and she gives an exact explanation of all of this. She talks about how as a dark skinned woman, the computers at MIT couldn't see her. She had to actually put on a plastic white face mask for the computer to scan her face because it didn't know how to see her.

LUVVIE Literally. It literally did not see her!

Sophia : No. It couldn't see her. She had been left out. When you think about justice as it pertains to AI. When you think about all of this insane facial recognition software. That software they've already proven recognizes people wrong. People get identified as, "Oh yeah, this guy. He's the person who did this on a CCTV when he's not," because the technology isn't clear enough for its analysis of the faces of people of color. This is not okay. This is what we talk about when we talk about privilege, bias, unconscious bias. This stuff really matters.

LUVVIE It's dangerous.

SOPHIA Hello.

LUVVIE This is why when we talk about privilege and people are just like, "I don't know what you're talking about," literally ... Can you hear me?

SOPHIA Oh, yeah. I was just like, "Hello," to the greater good.

LUVVIE Yes!

SOPHIA Hello world.

LUVVIE Hello. Yeah, it's dangerous and we have to take it seriously because our privileges, our biases, could kill people. The fact that when people identify who committed a crime and often when they're Black they're misidentified because people just think all Black folks look alike. You literally will point out, "That guy is the one that did the robbery." That guy goes to prison for 30 years. Meanwhile, he never did it because you thought he looked just like that guy who definitely didn't look alike.

Until we can really have the actual conversations with white people without the defensiveness. Without the, "Oh, but I'm not that bad," we won't get anywhere because we have to convince those ideas that we have that we don't even realize we have. It's why it's so important for you, Sophia, how you use your platform. You've probably changed hearts and minds more than you can understand and it's necessary.

Part of the reason why Share the Mic was so important, Share the Mic Now, I can say it a thousand times to the audience who listens to me. They've already heard it. They believe it. They get it. I'm preaching to the choir. To be able to say it in front of people who may not have heard it just that way or having this conversation about AI. Do you know how many people don't realize how AI is the future and robots are literally becoming racists because the people who program them are racist? It's just something we don't think about. We don't talk about it. There's too many layers to this whole white supremacy topic that it's not one day that's going to let you know all the different layers. It's not one account, right? Which is why all of us have to do our part to talk about the different parts that we know about.

SOPHIA Yes.

LUVVIE It's so important.

SOPHIA It's so, so important. To your point, I think a lot of people get scared of confronting. I think a lot of people get upset when they hear the term white privilege. I see a lot of white people be like, "I've worked really hard for what I have." I'm not saying you haven't. What I'm saying is that what you look like hasn't made you getting your work done harder. You don't get pulled over six times a month and asked if the van with your company logo on it that you are driving actually belongs to you. You don't get asked if that van with your company logo on it that is registered to you has equipment in the back or drugs. That just doesn't happen to you if you look like me.

Admitting that isn't a bad thing. What it should do is make you realize that you want to then weaponize that knowledge to defend other people who are made to suffer simply because of the way that they look because it's bullshit y'all. It's not right. To your point, I can talk about what it is like to be a woman and to be harassed, or subjugated, or doubted in the workplace til I am blue in the face. When it gets really impactful in certain rooms of men is when a man says, "Did you see the way that she was treated at work, because that was bullshit?" Then other men go, "Oh. You're not losing anything by admitting that, so I guess I can also admit the thing that I can see and I'm going to lose something."

Admitting your privilege doesn't mean you're going to lose anything. It means you're going to unite for other people better.

LUVVIE Fact.

SOPHIA That's part of the reason that we share mics. That's part of the reason that we have conversations. That's part of the reason that we need to widen our purview and understand this stuff. It's the only ways systems will ever change. No matter how privileged you are, when you live in a system that is weighted unevenly by privilege, it's actually not doing you any favors either. It's doing such a small group of the most privileged people all the favors and then nobody else is getting any other favors. That to me doesn't feel right.

LUVVIE Because it's not right. The thing about privilege is, to your point, it's limitless if you're white. The rest of us can use our certain privilege up to a certain point. I can speak up and do all these things as successful as I am, but the gatekeepers are still white so they can definitely punish me any moment they want and be like, "You know what? Don't invite her to come speak." When you're white, you have more room. You're white, you've got to use it.

The point is, we love to listen to people who look like us. Let's just admit it, right? I can say the same thing. You can say that same thing. People who listen to you will hear it better from you, which is why I need people who when they decide that okay, I might not be the one to say the thing first, but if you are in the room with a person who say that thing that you believe in, can you please back them up?

Even if you were not the first person to say it, your backup provides currency for that person to stand on. One person, easy to ignore. Two people, a little bit less hard to ignore. Three people saying the same thing. Now you've got to be like, "All right. We're going to have to pay attention." If you're in a meeting. If you're in a room and somebody says something, instead of you coming to them after the fact and be like, "Oh my God, that was so great. I'm so glad you said it."

SOPHIA "You are so smart!"

LUVVIE Keep that. I saw an article that calls that micro appreciations. Nobody needs a micro appreciation. If you can't say it in the room where everybody else can hear that you believe in what they said, keep it to yourself. We don't want to hear it. I talk about being the domino in my TED Talk. It's because I'm like, "The domino does the thing that feels like falling, but if you can't be the domino, then fall with the first domino. That is your job if you don't think of nothing else." I want people to remember that. Be somebody's backup.

SOPHIA Yup. That's the difference between being an ally and an accomplice.

LUVVIE Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

SOPHIA You taught me that. Something I would like to say, again, for everyone who's watching our conversation who looks like me, something that's really important for us to remember because there's a lot of conversation right now about allyship. That's great. Show up. Be an ally. Use your

privilege. Spend your privilege 100%. What I would like to encourage is that nobody who looks like me should be out there declaring, "I'm an ally." It's not about us. The people who we are showing up to stand alongside who are domino-ing with will tell us if the work we're doing is allyship or not.

LUVVIE That part.

SOPHIA It's not our term to give to ourselves. Show up and do the work and let someone say to you, "Thank you for being an ally," and then you can go, "okay. I'm doing an all right job. I'm going to keep doing the things," and I'm going to keep learning. I'm going to keep my mind open. I'm going to be open to feedback. I'm ready to listen if I said the wrong thing. Please tell me so I can say it better next time. I want to be of service to my community at large. That's what I'm here for, but it's not about us, so we don't need to declare ourselves allies. We just need to show up and do the work.

LUVVIE I love that point. For anybody who's on this live, first of all shout out for y'all welcoming me onto Sophia's platform so warmly. I loved it. Shout out to LuvvNation, who is in here. That's how I created a guide for your audience. I'll even send it to mine too. It's called [Be the Domino: A Guide to Truth Telling](#). I really want to get people the tools. Okay, I'm saying, "Speak up. Tell the truth. Hold people accountable. How do you do it?"

In the guide I put my toolkit for how I make sure I always try to speak the truth even when it's hard. Y'all can download it for free. It's bethedomino.com. Be-the-dom-i-no.com. Go get the guide to truth telling and just do your best. All we can ask is your best and that you show up not just for the people who look like you, or believe in the God you believe in or don't, or the person you love.

Show up for the people who aren't in your privileged group. Show up for the people who don't have the power you have. Show up for the people who don't have anything to give to you. When you do that, I think you'll feel better. When people say, "I don't know what to do," and they feel guilty about it, it's because they know they're not doing what they should be. Yeah.

SOPHIA I love that. To your point, you've offered people some resources. With our whole community from Share the Mic Now, we've been able to offer people resources to take action. To make phone calls, call elected officials, sign petitions. I'm also going to encourage. I've heard a lot of people say, "Well, I just don't know where to start. I want to help, but I don't know where to start." What I say lovingly to that is, "We have the Google machine. Our parents didn't have that." It might have been harder to start in the past, but it is not hard to start now.

LUVVIE Not hard.

SOPHIA You can quite literally Google "anti-racism work" and just get started.

LUVVIE Pick one. You don't have to donate \$80,000 or do a Share the Mic Now. Pick one. It might mean doing a phone bank. It might mean talking to your uncle who made a racist joke. It might just mean holding space for your friend who is Black and saying, "You know what? I hear you." Pick something. It doesn't have to be world changing, but I really do believe that every act that we do

makes some type of difference. It can be a domino. It can reverberate. Inspire other people. It might be providing a meal for somebody who you know ain't got it. Do something. It doesn't all have to be deep, but do something. The thing that feels most easy, do that thing first and then work your way up.

SOPHIA Yeah. Get yourself started somewhere.

LUVVIE Just do something. I need everybody to not feel the paralysis of perfection. I need us to not think what we're doing is not enough. The only way it's not enough is if you honestly know that you have not stood up for somebody or showed up for somebody in the moments that you should.

SOPHIA Yes. I love that.

LUVVIE Sophia, this has been amazing.

SOPHIA I just love you.

LUVVIE I'm going to be texting Sophia, "I miss you. Let me see your face."

SOPHIA I know.

LUVVIE This has been amazing. Thank you for saying yes to us when we asked you to Share the Mic now. You said yes without question. You said yes in such a trustworthy way. I have such deep gratitude for how you show up in the world. How you are an ally. How you are showing what sisterhood looked like. We met at Oprah's Supersoul Sunday was it?

SOPHIA Yup.

LUVVIE Me and Sophia end up at the same table because we were chosen for Oprah Winfrey's Supersoul 100. I remember we talked for three hours straight.

SOPHIA It was you and me and Sarah Elizabeth Lewis, who's been in this live!

LUVVIE Yeah. Yes!

SOPHIA Who's teaching incredible unbelievable work you guys at Harvard. She is, oh my God, a vision in justice. Google that also. The three of us were like little kids in the corner. They kept trying to organize us and do things and we were like, "What?"

LUVVIE We just kept on talking.

SOPHIA We were getting in trouble.

LUVVIE Ever since you have been a beacon. You've been one text away and it just means a lot because literally in a world where it's hard for Black women to have white women who would show up for them, having you is a piece of joy.

SOPHIA Well, I am the luckiest person on Earth to have you in my life. As a friend and a co-conspirator. A person who I can break the rules with, and travel with, and snack with, and laugh with.

LUVVIE All the snacks.

SOPHIA Truly you are my family. Thank you for your trust. For you to trust me with the inner workings of your heart and for you to feel comfortable with me to the point where you can tell me what you need, it's a real gift.

Even with all the good that happened because of [Share the Mic Now](#), as I'm sitting here in August recording this recap, it feels like one step forward, two steps back. Breonna Taylor's killers have still not been charged with her death and coverup. Just this week, Jacob Black was shot 7 times in the back after breaking up a fight while his little boys watched it happen. We have to keep calling on the phone so they can't ignore us. We have to keep speaking out. This is not what brotherhood and sisterhood looks like. Most of all? We have to vote.

Grateful to Sophia and the other women from Share the Mic Now who are still showing up and speaking out. I'm on Sophia's podcast, [Work In Progress](#) this week, so we'll drop the link to that episode in the show notes. You can follow her on Instagram [@sophiabush](#).

Much love to Chicago Recording Company, where I currently do not record this podcast, but they're such a huge help putting my recordings from home together and making the sound on point.

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As always, follow me on social media. I'm [@Luvvie](#) everywhere.