

**Matt Bowles:** My guest today is Lovelda Vincenzi. She is a location independent entrepreneur and international keynote speaker who trains women to be professional speakers, market themselves, and integrate keynote speaking into their businesses. She is also a [TEDx speaker](#) and a founder of and a renowned moderator who has been trusted to facilitate conversations with political figureheads, business leaders, celebrities, changemakers, and activists from a variety of sectors and industries. Lovelda is passionate about diversity, equity, and inclusion, and prioritizes DEI in both her own personal business and at the events in which she is hired to participate. Born in the Caribbean, developed in Papua New Guinea, and refined in the United Kingdom, Lovelda has now traveled to over 50 countries.

Lovelda, welcome to the show.

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** Hey, hey, hey, great to be here.

**Matt Bowles:** I am so excited to have you here. Let's just start off by setting the scene and talking about where we are recording from today. Unfortunately, we are not in person. But the fact that we have agreed to make this a virtual wine night. So, let's also talk about what we are drinking. I am actually in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Asheville, North Carolina, and the East coast of the United States. And I have just opened a bottle of Malbec from Cahors, France.

So, I am going to be drinking through that on this episode tonight, but where are you Lovelda and what are you drinking?

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** I am in London, United Kingdom, but I have got an Italian vino. It's a special Primitivo, it's a Di Manduria.

**Matt Bowles:** I love that. I am a big fan of Italian wine. Just last year, I spent about a month in the Piedmont region in the Northwest of Italy, and I actually went there to attend the International White Truffle Festival.

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** Get out.

**Matt Bowles:** It takes place in Alba, Italy. And as it turns out, Alba is the base of both the Barolo and the Barbaresco wine regions, which are two of my favorite Italian wines. And so, I had a pretty insane month of eating and drinking in Italy, so I have all love for Italian wines, but you have quite the connection with Italy. Do you want to share a little bit about your connection with Italy?

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** Oh, I married an Italian, so, now I get great Caribbean food from my Caribbean roots and great Italian food. Basically, I struggle to stay at any reasonable size, to be honest with you. Because if I go to Italy to visit my mother-in-law, she shows love through feeding and it's very difficult for me to say no, cause it's all so delicious.

So instead, I just go less often, which is probably not the right answer, but I haven't figured out how to be there and eat less.

**Matt Bowles:** But let's talk a little bit about your background. Can you share a little bit about where you grew up or the multiple places where you grew up and reflect a little bit on how that shaped your cultural identity?

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** I've probably had one of the most, I say one of the most eclectic, but I'm one of those people now where if you ask me where I'm from, I don't really have an answer. It should be a very simple question. I'm that chick you go, where are you from? And I go, uh, and it's kind of like, why is it taking you so

long to answer that question. It should be really simple. So, I was. Born in the Bahamas. I'm actually originally from the Turks and Caicos Islands. One of the best places that keeps showing up on almost every reality TV program. That's where they go on their vacays. That's where I'm originally from a tiny little group of islands in the Caribbean.

Don't ask me too much about them though, Matt. I left when I was three. At three years old, we migrated to the other side of the world. I'm talking about the 12 hours' time difference. So first we went to the Solomon Islands and then we lived in Papua New Guinea. We were there for 11 years. So, think Australia just above Australia.

That's where I kind of grew up. I was there till I was like about 15, 16 years old. And then at that age, we moved back in this direction. To the United Kingdom, I feel like I had a reverse culture shock. It was kind of weird. I went from a developing country to a developed country and that kind of shook me to the core.

So yeah, very mixed upbringing, which means I can say I'm from the Turks and Caicos, but I don't really relate to that. And I left Papua New Guinea so many years ago that I can't fully relate to that. And I kind of sound British, but I'm not really British. So, I don't know where I belong anymore, Matt.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, you are at home on this podcast because my average guest has been to over 50 countries and lived in a whole bunch of different places, so these are exactly the types of conversations that we have, and they're best over wine, I find, which is why we're doing that this evening.

But for folks that have never been to Papua New Guinea, can you share a little bit about Papua New Guinea? What is it like in Papua New Guinea? And also share a little bit about what your personal experience was like, because you were pretty immersed in the international community scene there.

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** I was, for me, it was home for a very long time. And often when you live somewhere, it's really easy to overlook what makes it different. Well, Papua New Guinea is really well known around the world for diving. It's a great place, with beautiful oceans. It's a great location that a lot of people go to, to dive. At the time I lived there in the nineties, it was safeish.

So, my experience was I was living in a country that has, I 300 languages, still has very tribal areas, but also as an expat living there, I was very aware that I was in a quite a position of privilege and a really good target for somebody who was just looking to put food on the table, you know?

So, as my experience growing up, I didn't get on public transport. Properly till I was 16 and I moved to the UK, and I felt well hard done by then. I was like, what do you mean you need me to get on a bus? And that was just because it was really not safe for me to get on a bus and do public transport in Papua, New Guinea. It was just asking for trouble.

So, I didn't realize that I was somewhat spoiled, but as far as I was concerned, everybody else lived in exactly the same sort of way. I went to international schools. My friends' lifestyles were exactly the same as my lifestyle for the most part. And so, to me, it was the norm.

So, I guess I kind of, I'm able to see privilege very differently because when you're in it. You don't know you're in it until you're taken out of it. And then you kind of go, oh, okay, I get it. Right. So, there's kind of this mixed bag of knowing that I was in a very privileged position, but also understanding that I was working in a very different dynamic. There's layers of privilege, so to speak.

**Matt Bowles:** And how did your interest and experience with world travel develop? When you think back, other than the places where your family was based and living, what type of travel experiences did you have as you were coming up? And how did that interest develop?

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** So, for me, because we were literally on the opposite side of the world from my extended family, part of the deal, as I understood it, was that we got a trip home every single year.

So naturally, travel just became part of how I grew up. So, every time there was a school break, I mean, they're called different things in different parts of the world, whether it was the Christmas break or half term or whatever it was, we tended to jump on a plane and go somewhere. So, the longer breaks, sort of six weeks. Summer break, which at that side of the world happens around Christmas time, we'd head back to the Caribbean and in the shorter breaks, we'd kind of pop to Asia. I say pop to Asia or Australia.

I live in the UK now, so it sounds quite exotic, but I was in Papua New Guinea. It was a three-hour flight. It was like popping from London to the South of France. It was kind of that vibe, but we do that. Multiple times a year. So, I was used to jumping on a plane every two to three months, to be honest. And I thought that was normal. So, everybody did it.

**Matt Bowles:** And so, when you eventually got to the UK, how was that transition for you?

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** So, when I moved to the UK, I didn't actually move to London. I actually moved to a tiny little place called Takeley in Hertfordshire, a tiny little place. And then I went to school in Newport, but not Newport, Wales, Newport, Hertfordshire. So, in the middle of basically countryside Ville, right? So, I went from. Super international school, my friends were from all over the world, all around Asia, America, Australia, New Zealand.

When I say global, to this day, friends I went to school with, then all over the world. They're in the US, they're in Canada, they're in Papua New Guinea, they're in Australia, they're in New Zealand. So, I was used to consistently being surrounded by people from all over the world and the different cultural dynamics that brought.

And then when I moved, we moved to a very small, I mean, it was very homogenous. Let's just put it that way that there weren't many people walking around looking like me at the time. And not that I noticed until I heard a couple of conversations, and I was like, uh, Oh, okay. But to me, it was odd not to see variety.

Okay. Because I was used to seeing variety. What was strange to me was Wait a minute, you've never left the country, you live in England, and you've never been to London. You know that sort of thing was kind of weird to me. You don't own a passport, that was sort of strange to me. But like I said, I grew up in a bubble and everybody around me was always traveling, so I thought it was normal.

**Matt Bowles:** So, what was the impact of that experience and finding yourself in that type of environment?

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** I got to see that I think of the world very differently. So, I really value travel very differently and it's very much supported me in the work that I do now in terms of the way that I see the world. So, one of the things I really got to see was there are benefits.

I'm not saying it's right or wrong. There are benefits to growing up in the same town with the same group of friends and all of that kind of stuff and having a really close connection. But what also happens is, you think

that's the world the same way I thought the world was traveling. You think the world is being in one place all of the time.

And so, what I later sort of found as I started stepping into speaking and that sort of stuff, I'll give you an example. I remember doing an interview. This was around the time I was a guest on a news show. And this was around the time the planes went missing in Malaysia. And we were talking about people stepping down from their governmental roles.

And the question was asked to the panelists is this a sign that they've done something wrong? And people are like, yeah, yeah, you know, of course it's a sign they've done something wrong. Of course. Why would you step down if it wasn't your fault? And I said, I could agree if we were talking Western culture, but in Eastern culture, it's a sign of respect to say something bad happened on my watch.

So, I'm stepping down. And so, when you add the cultural context to things, actually, Things change. And I kind of got, when I look at something, I have to put multiple lenses on to understand somebody's perspective. But if you remove the cultural lenses and you're just, I mean, we're all wearing a cultural lens, but if you can't see that there's a different cultural lens, then there's a misunderstanding because you're interpreting the world through what you know to be true, which is completely different for other cultures and parts of the world.

So, I think I really kind of understood that as I started going, well, you guys think of things in a bit of a fixed way, don't you? I always find myself going that's an interesting perspective. Here's a different perspective. different way of perhaps looking at the same thing.

**Matt Bowles:** Can you talk a little bit about how your travel as an adult began? Cause when you're traveling as a kid and your family's moving you around and all that kind of stuff, that's sort of one type of experience. But then as you came of age in Europe and started making the choice to independently begin traveling yourself, can you talk about some of those early experiences?

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** Sure. I mean, the first thing I'd say is my parents just gave me the travel bug. Cause if you've always been traveling and then you suddenly stop, it's a problem. Okay. It was a problem. I was like, what do you mean? We're not going on holiday. This is weird to me. What we do is we holiday, we travel. But the other thing was they gave me a really solid foundation for thinking of travel.

So, we traveled a lot, but I was always encouraged to taste local foods, to understand local culture, to kind of dive in. We didn't stay in a five-star resort. I mean, we stayed in resorts and that sort of stuff, but it wasn't these all-inclusive bubbles. It was like, tasting the food.

And my parents always wanted to kind of have a little bit of a sense of culture. So, I guess I got that growing up that I still have today. I've never enjoyed traveling and being in a little bubble ecosystem. I could be anywhere in the world. Why the hell have I come all the way out here? It doesn't make any sense to you. Right?

So, I found as I started to have any money and when I say any money, I mean, I discovered one year when I'd finished my A levels, which is probably like finishing high school. It's just before college, that kind of age that there was this trip going to via bus. Your girl was so desperate to get out of the country. I was prepared to sit on a bus from London to Poland.

In case you don't know, there's five countries between London and Poland, but I was so desperate to get out and explore and I didn't have the money for the flight. I go on a bus, Matt, I go on a bus for five, it was 36 hours. I think it was, it was long, but I had the bug to travel.

And I thought if I can't afford it. To do it the way my family used to do it, I'll do it. However, my budget can extend. So, I found clever ways as I went through college and university and that sort of stuff to just get back out there. I used to do annual birthday trips by myself because I just needed to get out of the country.

I got the bug. It's an itch. Get home. And I'm like, I need to get out. I need to explore. It was not a true backpack. I, I could never fully do it, but I wanted, it was this thing. I didn't have the money. I've been working for three or four years, and I was made redundant. My lease was up on my flat. I didn't own a car. I owned no furniture. Pretty much all of my everything could fit in a car at the time.

And I thought, I don't know when this opportunity is ever going to come again. And I didn't care. It was the middle of winter and nobody else wanted to travel with me. I told my mom, mom, I think I'm going to do traveling because in Europe, you can get into mainland Europe and then interrail or travel via train and bus by land reasonably cheaply. So, I thought, right, that's what I'll do. I told my mom I was going for a month. I left for three months. And by the end of that year, I was pretty much just traveling. I came home for a week. Then my parents were living in the Caribbean at the time.

So, I went to visit them for three weeks. Then I came back and one of my friends was in Tanzania. So, I went to visit her. And by the time I calculated it, I was hardly home that year. I was Out of the country more than I was in the country. It was a good year.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, I also want to talk to you a little bit about your professional career trajectory and your path to entrepreneurship. Can you share a little bit about that?

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** I had a really mixed journey, so I did green accounting and financial management, which makes people giggle. Cause they're like, "Really, you are Accounting?" Yes. I used to love Math. Okay. I was that kid, but I discovered I didn't love accounting. And then I did lots of various different things working. I did project management. I worked in sales.

And the truth is somewhere in the back of my mind for a while, I had this idea that I thought I could run a business, but I had no idea what the freak the business was going to be. And I was a little bit terrified. It's kind of like, oh, if I go into work, they pay me.

And this entrepreneurship stuff felt a lot more terrifying than the path that my parents had spoken about. You know, go to school, you go to college, you go to university, you get yourself a good job, you work yourself up the corporate ladder. Uh, but something about that never quite sat well with me. And I started lots of businesses whilst I was working full time.

So, for those of you who started businesses, and they failed, great! Been there, done that, opened them, closed them, half started them, had half a customer, changed my mind, did that, all of that, all of the things. I had years of kind of faffing around and going around in circles and trying to figure things out and accidentally stumbled across hosting.

And that's just seemed to work really quickly and really easily. It's like I did a gig, another one came and then another client came and then people started finding me and I was like, geez, Louise, I'm not even telling people. about this and it's growing. And then two worlds collided. I was in a job I was absolutely

miserable in, and my manager was driving me nuts around about the same time the career was kicking off to the point I was having holidays from work. We get a lot of holidays in the UK. Sorry, Americans, y'all don't get no holidays, but in the UK, we get like 20 days of actual annual leave where you could take, and it's paid.

But I was burning through those days. So, I would take a holiday, but that holiday was really because somebody had booked me to fly somewhere to speak. And so, I was pushing my luck and getting myself pretty burnt out. So, when the two things collided that I really could no longer handle the manager anymore, and at the same time, this thing was growing. I thought, you know what? I'm just going to quit. I'm not going to look for another job. I'm going to double down on this for a couple of years and see what happens. And here I am.

**Matt Bowles:** Here you are. I think that's an important story for folks because a lot of people are in that corporate job or whatever the regular full-time job is, they're not entirely satisfied. It might be bad or oftentimes more dangerous. It's probably mediocre and it's like, okay, it's not particularly inspiring, but it kind of pays the bills. So, you aren't really motivated to look for something better.

But for folks that are there in that position and really would like to make that entrepreneurial transition, I think your approach to it is really a good one. You know, my approach was, I just unexpectedly got fired from my job one day and I'm like, you know what? I'm not looking for another job. I'm just going to figure out how to start my own business. Then I'm like, wait a minute, don't, I don't know how to start a business. I better go to the bookstore and start reading books on how to start a business.

I don't necessarily recommend that approach to people, but I think your approach, and maybe if you can share any tips or reflecting back on it now about how to build up a side hustle while you are still working your regular job to the point where you are comfortable and confident enough in it as a sustainable source of income to jump ship and go into a full time.

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** The first thing I'd say is jumping ship is terrifying. So, I was not at that perfect point when I jumped, it was the office moves. My manager was getting so frustrated. I just needed to go. I literally couldn't take the job anymore. So, I had to quit the job, but it wasn't the time I wanted to quit the job. I didn't have the income lined up and the consistency, all of that sort of stuff. I had savings. So, I knew I could pay bills for about a year and a half, maybe if I was sensible, but it wasn't an ideal time.

So, I think the first thing to say is often there's not a perfect time to make the leap. It's terrifying. And that is reasonably normal. I quit. I remember I had a coach at the time, and I was freaking out and I was on the phone to her, and I was like, Oh my God, I'm freaking out and freaking out and freaking out.

And she said, "Then stay." And I said, I can't stay because that was inconceivable. So, she said, so what's wrong? I said, I'm just scared. And so, it's normal to be scared for me. The reason was I never wanted to leave my job and go full time in a business that was going to be worse than a job. I was just waiting to find something that set my heart alight.

My thinking was at least in a day job, I go in, I put up with some stuff. I do a job. And I leave, I don't have to worry about all the rest of this stuff, right? On the business side of things, it's going to take a little while. Now I'm in the finance department. I'm the salesperson. I'm the head of marketing. I'm HR. I'm all of the things. I wasn't all the things in my job. I just had to sell stuff. That was it. And provided I sold, they just let me get on with my job. Right.

So, I thought I'm not going to quit my day job to then move into something that isn't inspiring and doesn't like my heart a light. So, now I have a job I own that just didn't feel good to me. So, I think the beauty of having the day job was I had the freedom to play. No client was ever this client I needed. My bills were going to be paid at the end of the month, regardless.

So, I could say no to things that didn't work, and I could play around with stuff. And I had that kind of flexibility, which to be honest, anytime you start a business that first year, you're just making stuff up and stumbling over yourself a bit. It's great to know at least your bills are paid.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, you built a successful business and career as an Emcee, a moderator, a host. You would get hired by people that are putting on events to do that role. And you were able to scale that up and make that successful. And I want to talk to you now, about your transition or expansion from that into delivering international keynote addresses and becoming a speaker and the distinction there.

And I think maybe a good place to start would be with your [TEDx talk](#), which I have now watched twice and we're going to link it up in [the show notes](#) and I want people to go and watch it. Number one, because it's a really good talk and I want them to watch the way that you deliver it. Number two, the substance of the content of your talk is really important.

So, I'm wondering if you can just for folks that have not yet seen it, if you can share a little bit about what led up to that, why you were inspired to do the talk, what it was about, and then what that led to?

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** So, a lot of people ask me, how do you get a [TEDx talk](#)? And the truth is you can just apply for them. And I went through a phase about five years ago where I applied to lots of TEDx talks, moved forward quite a bit, but I just kept not getting through. And so, I eventually kind of, in true Lovelda style, went to sell it. If I meant to do a TEDx, they're coming to me. And I just left it at that. I thought I'm not putting myself through this stress anymore.

If I'm meant to do it, they're coming to me. Fast forward, several years later, we've got a clubhouse. I'm going to clubhouse going, you don't need a TEDx in order to make money from speaking. Cause I ain't got one and I'm doing all right. Okay. And I kept saying, it's not that I'm anti TEDx is it's just a point to get out.

You don't need one, but if they came to me, I'd take it. And then I woke up one day to an inbound inquiry from a TEDx organizer saying, we'd love to have you come talk. And I was waiting for them to send me a link to apply, and it never happened. I didn't have to do any of the applications. I didn't do any of the pre stuff.

I got a review from somebody. They saw my profile. They loved me. They had no idea what the heck I was going to speak about at the time. I had no idea what I was going to speak about. And they just booked me. And I was like, okay, I guess I'm going to have to figure it out. And so, my thought process is what is a message that in 10- or 20-years' time, I would still want to stand behind.

If I'm going to get on that red dot and talk about something, I want to talk about something that really means something to me. And it took me a little while to get there, but if I had done the talk any earlier, the experiences I talked about in that talk would not have existed. And the timing was just perfect.

So, the talk was July 2022 is when I did it live and it came out a few months later, and I really wanted to have a conversation about diversity and inclusion and in particular about what it means to create diversity because I'm watching the world throw this freaking term around like its candy. Everybody's talking about diversity.

And the thing that got me was I was watching so much conflict kickoff in the space of diversity where you'd have some people going, oh my gosh, I've got white privilege, and I don't know what to do about it. And I'm feeling really guilty, and I want to ask questions, but I don't know how to ask questions.

And I'm really quite terrified. And then you get other people going, I don't know why I have to explain myself to you. And I experienced it. You know, like I experienced like, why am I doing all this explanation? It's really quite exhausting. But to me, I kind of looked at it and I went, there's a place in the middle because diversity isn't just about ethnicity or sexuality or gender.

It's also about age. It's also about weight. When we talk about diversity, we mean. allowing everybody the space to show up as who they are. So, I wanted to find a framework that would allow people to start to explore the two sides that allows that to be reality, which is as an individual, to what extent do I truly authentically show up as myself, regardless of the scenario that I just kind of show up and I'm like, here I am. I'm not trying to fit in. I'm just showing up as me.

And as an individual, to what extent do I make open, warm spaces for others to show up. I just use myself as an example because I'd had quite a profound experience over COVID in particular with my hair, it was relaxed and transitioning to full blown natural hair.

Let's just say it's an experience. Those who know, who know, and those who don't go watch the TEDx and then you'll know. It is a journey and a half, but it really got me to see, holy heck, girl, you ain't been showing up. You've been squeezing yourself in, in order to fit in. And it had me question that in multiple areas of my life.

And so, I just invited others to look at the same thing. But then I also looked at, well, hold on a minute, Lovelda. You're here talking about being a stand for women's voices globally in the world. And yet when a woman has the courage to show up and be like, right, I'm ready to be paid. You hear negotiating with them. Really? You got to stop.

And there's ways in which we perpetuate norms around that mean that we have to have these agendas around diversity, equity, and inclusion because we're just on autopilot and it's just a call to question the things we're doing on autopilot.

**Matt Bowles:** I want to ask your advice on a few different parts of speaking, one, on the actual skillset of delivering great speeches. And then the other on the business side of how to professionalize your speaking engagements and command the money that you deserve for delivering the value that you're able to deliver.

But first let's talk about how to deliver enough value to get paid for your speeches. Can you break down some of the mechanics of what constitutes a great keynote speech? When you're thinking about, okay, this is the message and the concept that I want to deliver in my [TEDx talk](#).

How do you actually put that into a great delivery? Or if someone was to say, oh, you know, I actually did get an offer to go and do my first keynote speech as a paid thing. Now I really need to step it up a notch and make sure that I deliver an incredible talk. What are some of the mechanics that go into a great keynote speech?

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** The first thing I'd say is there's a distinction between a keynote and a training and often, especially people who've kind of done a lot of webinars and that sort of stuff, mix the two up and they think they want to teach. A keynote is not a teachy thing. That's not what it is. A keynote is about bringing

together stories and data and examples to showcase a single note. That's why it's called a keynote. One note, not 1500 different messages.

There is a single message that everything that you're putting into that keynote is designed to elevate. And often I found the biggest mistake that people make when they're looking to step into keynote speakers, they're not keynoting, they're just teaching. And they're not the same thing.

**Matt Bowles:** And let's talk a little bit about the business side of this. One of the things that you teach is how to start getting paid for speaking and why that is a really significant and important endeavor that business owners from all sorts of industries should consider incorporating into their business.

So, one of the distinctions that I have heard you make is the difference between a public speaker and a professional speaker. And I would love to start there because as you know, you and I met probably about a year ago at the Bansko Nomad Fest in Bulgaria and I delivered the opening keynote address of that conference.

I have been invited to deliver keynote addresses at a number of conferences, and it'll usually be the conference organizer saying, "Hey, I'll give you a free pass to this conference, if you're willing to speak", which in some cases can be valuable. When I spoke at the South by Southwest conference, for example, a platinum pass to that conference is 2500.

And so, I was offered that in exchange for speaking and you'd get access to some of these parties and networking things and all that. And it's kind of a place that I'd like to be anyways. And so, I've done a lot of those barter kind of things, especially if it's a place I want to be and there's people I want to be around and you kind of go in as a speaker and there's a lot of value to doing that. And then the government of Buenos Aires invited me to come down and speak at the Nomads BA conference.

And although I wasn't paid, they offered to put me up at a five-star hotel for a week and cover some of the expenses and that kind of stuff. But I'm not a paid professional keynote speaker, but after listening to a lot of your content, I'm thinking, you know what? Maybe should be a paid professional keynote speaker.

And so, for someone like me, let's just say who has some public speaking experience and has some documentation of that and some photos of that and the media kid and some things of this nature, what are some of the elements and steps to transition from a public speaker to a professional speaker, and then to gradually increase what you can command for a speaking fee.

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** I'm going to take a few steps back. And first I'm going to say there is nothing wrong inherently with an unpaid speaking engagement. The challenge is often the reason why people get stuck there is that they're doing the engagement in the hope that somebody is going to come to them and be like, "Hey, now I'm going to give you some money" and it very rarely works out like that.

Because if I'm an event organizer looking for somebody to keynote my massive event, I'm going to need some proof. And so, the problem that often happens with those people who have been doing a lot of free stuff is not that the free stuff was necessarily a bad idea, it's that they weren't thinking long term.

And so, the big way I found to describe it is you've been doing all this stuff so that your ability to deliver has improved, but your profile has remained at exactly the same level. So, you can't prove how good you are. So now it's your word against what the internet says. And that's often where the challenge is that within

you, you're going, I've been doing this for so many years and I'm really good at it, but then if somebody Googles you, they can't find that.

The best way I can think of to describe it, it's like, you're getting married, and your best friend says, "Oh, my mate's son has a band". And you kind of go, that's cute. Unless of course you do a quick Google, you're like, they open for Beyonce shoot. And then you're like, hold on a minute. Let me just backpedal. Maybe I do want to hire my friend's son.

But up until that point, it's cute. And you're just not paying it that much attention because your wedding is a big day for you. At least it is for most people. It's one of those days where you really are kind of like, I want it to be a massive celebration.

I don't want to take a chance. I want a professional person who's been in this environment before, who knows how to handle space. And so, the problem often where people are having that disparity in terms of their experience versus what they're being paid is that they're unable to demonstrate it and de risk it for the organizer.

So, organizers, what do they say? Sure, sure. Your friend's son can come do it for free by paying him to come do it. I'm not putting my money behind this. Cause that's cute. So, what I look at when I'm working with people, as I say, what we've got to do first is really start looking fundamentally looking at speaking engagements differently.

I have a gig evaluation framework, which has four key areas that I have people look at when it comes to evaluating speaking engagements, which gives you a really great way of making every speaking engagement count because they do different things. Some engagements are really good for short term payment.

And other engagements pay in the longer term, but only if you stop leaving stuff to chance and start taking it on board as a responsibility. Because to me, a professional speaker isn't speaking in hope and will and blah, blah, blah, blah. They're contracting and there's processes they've got in place. So, if you're doing the free speaking engagements or the unpaid speaking engagements right now, get stuff that makes sense to you. And Matt, you've been doing some of that anyway.

**Matt Bowles:** Yeah. And I think to your point, I know one of the things that you teach is how to optimize each speaking engagement and use that for residual value. So, for example, getting great photos of yourself while you're speaking, getting video of yourself while you're speaking, getting a testimonial from the organizer of that event about how great you were, and then putting all of that into a media kit and building that up.

So, I think that makes a lot of sense and I've definitely done some of that. So once someone is at that point where they've done some of these talks, they've gotten some of those photos, they have some of that social proof. What then is the strategy for them to say, you know what? I'd like to create. A, an additional stream of income for my business by doing the professional speaking and having that be another stream of income, but B, in doing so further leveraging that for the overall benefit of my business, what do you recommend for that path?

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** Initially, you want to take a few steps back and say, what do you want speaking to do for you? As a business owner, I kind of say speaking can be a marketing channel. It can be a direct sales

channel. It can be a product in itself. There are very few opportunities that kind of present all of that. It just depends on how you use it.

And as a business owner, you've got a choice. You might say, I want it to be a product. And for others, you may not want it to be a product. It may just be a marketing channel, in which case select your engagements appropriately, there's no point speaking to audiences that can't buy or can't help you to get out to bigger groups.

If you know that your main reason why Speaking is as a marketing channel. If the main reason why you're speaking is to get paid, then you need to have a clear understanding of who pays for your message. And that might mean tweaking the way you deliver your content because the way you were, you're delivering your content before is not for the people who pay.

Doesn't mean you change your subjects. If we think of the idea of selling a pen or selling a crayon, if I was selling, let's say, a crayon to a child, I'll tell them, look, look at the pretty colors. It's so beautiful. Look how you can create this amazing picture for your parents. If I'm selling it to a teacher, look at how bold these colors are.

They can be seen from the back of the room. It's the same crayon. So how are you packaging your content for an audience who pays? And often People haven't thought who pays. They just been delivering the same content. And the clue is it's not the audience because the biggest mistake I see business owners make is like, I know my niche or my niche, as we say in the rest of the world, I know my niche, I know who's pays.

I understand the client. And then they'll in the same breath say, oh, but I don't know who pays for my talks. And then you don't know your client. Because the person who pays for you to speak is the client. The person who buys your services sometimes as a business owner is the audience. There are two different groups of people you need to understand and market to them appropriately.

**Matt Bowles:** That makes a lot of sense. I think that's a really important distinction.

Lovelda, I know you have now, through this whole process, built up an additional business of coaching and training women to speak professionally and get paid for that. So, can you talk a little bit about how you work with female business owners and what your coaching program looks like, what the experience is like at the start?

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** I started working specifically with women because what I found happened is as I grew as an emcee and host, the bigger the stages I got on, the fewer women I saw, and it aggravated me. And when I really kind of dug into it and started speaking to organizers and really kind of getting to the bottom of it, the problem was, you know, that organizers are saying women are just a lot harder to find.

And I thought, well, this is outrageous. I know loads of women. They all speak. I don't understand what the problem is. When I dived into it, turns out our sales and marketing around our speaking ain't that great half the time. So, people can't find us. So, a lot of the clients I work with is predominantly, it's actually women similar to you Matt.

But it tends to be women who have been speaking on stages a lot. They get brilliant feedback. People are raving about their stuff and yet nobody's paying them. And so, the work I do is to go, right, let's have a look at your positioning. Let's have a look at your niche. Let's have a look at your marketing.

Let's have a look at your profile. Let's actually systemize this business. I look at three key areas. I look at getting the gig, which is who are you targeting? How are you targeting them? And what the heck do I find when I look you up to support what you're saying? Then I look at securing the engagement, which is, do you even have a process for identifying what good looks like?

Do you have a contract? Do you know how to negotiate? What is your pricing structure? What are your negotiation terms? And then thirdly, we also work on leveraging the engagement, which means. How do we make sure that every gig you do makes it easier for you to get the next gig at a better price point? So those are the three core areas I work with women on predominantly, because it's how I grew my business.

I mean, in 18 months, I was interviewing people like Monica Lewinsky. It was insane. Literally, I kind of started 18 months later. I was going, what the heck has happened here? I didn't have a clue at the time. I got lucky with a handful of speaker bureaus who took me under their wing and awakened. Taught me all the things I was making stuff up and doing them in the wrong order.

I had footage that was terrible, and I was prioritizing stuff nobody cared about. And so, my job is helping to guide women to understand what the market is actually looking for to prioritize their time and energy to get traction quicker.

**Matt Bowles:** All right. So let me ask you this, if you were starting from scratch today, like let's say we take away all of your photos and videos of you speaking. None of them are existence. They've all evaporated into the ether and all of those people that hired you to do those speeches, none of them are reachable. There are no testimonials. There's no verification. You, Lovelda, with the skills and talents that you have and the knowledge that you have are starting literally from scratch and you want to go from zero to well-paid professional speaker, what does that path look like for you?

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** Oh, nobody's asked me that question before that. That's a powerful question. I like it. The path would look like the first getting on stages. Because I can't get any evidence without being on the stages. And I'd make that as easy as possible for myself. I think about, who do I know who has stages where I have content that's valuable?

And I would just get that evidenced. And I would prioritize in the first year or two. My job is to just get great quality footage to build a name for myself online and to build that profile. That's where I would start. I would prioritize photographs, videos, testimonials, great quality thought leadership content, and just that consistency of marketing, that consistency of system.

And I would also spend time doubling down on making sure that what I'm delivering is great. Just because you can speak doesn't mean you should get paid, right? There's a lot of nuances to being a great speaker and I wouldn't let that go. I wouldn't take that for granted. I'd get to every training that I could get to, but in that first year or two, most of my attention would initially not even be to getting paid.

My initial focus would be, let me evidence this first. And then I would start asking for money when I can at least prove that what I'm asking for is worth it versus just asking for money for the sake of asking for it. But if they came to me and said, how much is it? I'm going to quote them. I'm not going to ignore a gift horse.

I'm going to quote them a fee. If they ask me a fee, I'm going to quote them a fee and see what I can get away with.

**Matt Bowles:** Let me ask you this question also. Now that you have the perspective of being an experienced keynote speaker, when you watch other keynote speakers and you see keynotes, because this happens to me periodically, I will just see a keynote and I will be like, “Wow, there's levels to this”.

Like I have a long way to go, and I'll just be blown away by somebody's talk. I feel like you develop so much more appreciation for that the further you get into this experience. So, for you at this point, what are some aspects that make an outstanding talk just blows you Lovelda away when you hear a keynote.

What are some elements of a keynote that make it truly spectacular that you appreciate now that maybe at the very beginning you wouldn't even have been able to identify in the way that you can now because you're so deep in this game?

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** I kind of think of it, it's almost like hosting an event. When it's seamless is when you appreciate it the most, but the amount of nuance it takes for it to be seamless is insane. And it's kind of the same for speaking because I can tell you a great keynote can take months to perfect. Because it's not just the words. You've got the selection of the words that you use in the phraseology, but then it's the delivery because otherwise you've written a book.

If it was just about the words, it's about writing a book. Now you've got to perform the words. And so, to me, it's things like variety of tonality, you know, so you've got the content, which is how interesting is a story, but you can have an interesting story delivered poorly the same way you can have a brilliant joke.

But if somebody doesn't know how to deliver the joke, the joke just falls flat. Same way you can have a brilliantly written keynote, but if somebody doesn't know how to deliver it, it falls flat. And to me, it's the performance of it. It's the tonality. It's the standing. It's all of the little details that somebody's really thought about where to go and it's having it rehearsed to the point that it looks like they just walked on the stage, and this is just natural.

And those are the ones I'm blown away by because they've probably spent two years to get to that point to deliver it that level. And I think there's a lot of speakers where you get to the point where you're good enough. And you stop, but it's kind of the same way that there's lots of singers out there, but there aren't that many Beyonce's, you know, there aren't that many big-name singers that you remember.

And the reason you remember them is because they really honed their craft. This wasn't about going, “Oh, I've got a voice. I'm going to leave it here”. This was about continuously pushing. How far can I take this delivery? How far can I take this show? It became who they were. And you can tell the speaker that that's who they are versus the speaker who's going through the motions.

And that to me is the really the distinction between the ones where I'm blown away and the speakers where I'm like, “Oh, that was good”. The content was interesting, but your delivery wasn't. Yeah. You know, I could take it or leave it.

**Matt Bowles:** Agreed. So, in your coaching program, can you talk a little bit about first of all, who your ideal client is? Who is the specific type of person that is most appropriate for your coaching program? And maybe share a little bit about some of the success stories that you've had with some of the people that you've trained and mentored in the program.

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** So, the people who are ideal, I'm not really great at working with people who were shy, trying to develop that confidence on stage, mainly because I don't understand it. I was that kid who was like, "Oh my God, a stage. Can I take it?" Like that was me.

So, I'm not in that place where I can really relate to what it's like to be. Scared of being on a stage. I get nervous, but it's never stopped me from saying yes. I'll say yes. So that about 10 minutes before I'm due to jump on the stage, I'm then going, oh, shoot, what have I done?

But I know I'm going to do it, and I know it's going to be fine. So, the first thing is it's somebody who's super confident on stage. They already know what they're about. I'm not best person for kind of crafting that message. Like, you know, who you are as a speaker. You know what your key message is, your comfortable kind of creating that talk.

And when you're on stage, it's fire. Like it's when you come a light, but you just don't know how to turn it into cash. And every time you get off people like, "Oh my God, that's amazing". And they keep banging on your door, but nobody's got a paycheck for you. If that's you, then that's where I come in. Right?

Because what I do is I kind of go, "Oh my gosh, you're a diamond in the rough". If we just do these few things here, we can hone that message and make it easier for people to find you and position yourself differently and price you differently and help you understand what the market's looking for. Now you get to be somebody who's paid really handsomely for the great work that you're doing and the clients I've worked best with.

I had one. In particular, she started as a three-figure speaker and in three months ended as a five-figure speaker. So, to me, that's where the excitement is. And we got to the point where we had to stop talking about how she prices stuff. And we had to stop building her team because so much business was coming to her.

It was no longer about finding anything. It was about a, hold on a minute. How do we continue to push the envelope with this? Because what I'm doing is now positioned so well that the clients who thought they didn't have money and now having to dig deeper in their pockets and the new ones coming in. Now that the positioning is different, they're still saying yes, even though the price has gone up because the positioning was off.

**Matt Bowles:** All right. Let me ask you one more question and then we'll wrap this up and move into the lightning round. When you think back about all of the travel that you have done from the time you were growing up to the time you were backpacking around to now all of the international keynote speaking that you do for different cultural audiences around the world and everything else.

How has all of that travel impacted you as a person? And why are you so passionate about continuing to travel? What does travel mean to you?

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** I am so passionate about being able to see the world through multiple different viewpoints. So, a lot of my business, as well as keynoting is moderating and that's effectively bringing together the different voices on a stage.

And I do a lot of moderating in the sustainability and positive impact space where you have a lot of passionate voices from entirely different backgrounds. So, I could be doing a panel with a scientist, an

activist, somebody from a corporate background and a solution provider. How do you bring all of those voices together seamlessly in a conversation?

Where I've got students, I've got activists, I've got just Joe blocks, the public, who's interested. And then I've got specialists in these various different fields. And to me, what travels allowed me to do is to question more about what I know to be true and to just remain curious. And I think sometimes as humans, the reason we struggle to let in different perspectives is because we see the same thing so often that we forget that maybe people live a bit differently and there's a different way of seeing things that could be completely different.

And what travel lets me do is constantly reevaluate what I believe to be true. It would be stupid things, like I remember backpacking and getting somewhere. And people in the West, in particular, we walk around, if you've got a bunch of flowers, you hold them, so the flowers are facing towards the sun.

That's how everybody I knew held flowers. I was in Eastern Europe. They were holding the flowers, as far as I was concerned, upside down. But it wasn't one person, everybody did this. Everybody held the flowers the way I thought was the wrong way around. Now, does it matter in the grand scheme of life? No.

Did the flowers die as a result of them holding them in a different direction? No. But what it does show me is there isn't a right way to hold flowers, right? Some people hold them with the flowers facing the sun and others with the flowers facing to the ground and both are okay. The flowers have already been cut from the plant.

And so, to me, to be able to see those perspectives keeps my mind sharp to question what I believe to actually form my own perspectives on things rather than just assume that the way I've seen it all the time as the only way to do things because sometimes other people have got better ways.

**Matt Bowles:** I love that. All right, Lovelda, at this point, are you ready to move in to the lightning round?

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** Okay, let's do this.

**Matt Bowles:** Let's do it. What is one book that has significantly impacted you over the years you'd most recommend people should check out?

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** I'm going to tell you the book that's coming to me because there's a lot of books I really, really love. But one in particular, as we're thinking about thinking differently, is a book called *In the FLO* by a lady called Alisa Vitti. And the book is really about feminine cycles and how they affect how we work. And I found it particularly profound because as a I'm going to call myself an alpha female. I don't know if I still identify like that, but as somebody who's a woman and quite a bit of a go getter, I spent a lot of time in my masculine energy, forcing things forward.

And what that meant is I burnt out a lot. Like I'd have moments where I was really in flow and then all of a sudden, my brain would go really foggy, and I didn't know how to handle it. And what I loved about the book is it just gave me such a different way of thinking of how to work with the way my body naturally works.

It tells me what types of exercises to do when my creative time is, I was like, hold on a minute, my body is naturally designed to be like, we're thinking we're working, we're reflecting, we're thinking we're working, we're reflecting, like it's naturally designed to do that. I just need to go with the flow of it.

It's a brilliant book based on science recommended to men and women. I've had male coaches read it before so they can understand women that they're coaching better. It's absolutely fantastic. So that's the book I'm going to recommend. In the FLO.

**Matt Bowles:** All right, Lovelda, if you could have dinner with any one person who's currently alive today that you've never met, just you and that person for an evening of dinner and conversation, who would you pick?

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** Oprah Winfrey. That one was quick. I mean, I built my business moderating. I mean, she's a strong black woman who's built a huge impact and I just want to know how she thinks. I want to get into her brain. I want to understand that woman. I need to know how you created this show that people were so desperate to go on because you made careers.

Like, that to me is insane. So, it would be Oprah Winfrey, 100%.

**Matt Bowles:** Alright, knowing everything that you know now, if you could go back in time and give one piece of advice to your 18-year-old self, what would you say to 18-year-old Lovelda?

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** It's kind of two pieces. It would be trust yourself and be yourself.

**Matt Bowles:** Awesome. Alright, of all the places that you've now traveled in the world, what are three of your favorite destinations you would most recommend other people should definitely check out?

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** Okay. My first is the South of Italy for a number of different reasons. I got married there, but I also just came back from there. And I think it's a hidden gem. It's not a specific place. It's a region, that bottom part of the boot of Italy, Puglia, that kind of region. It is absolutely brilliant. Best food, really affordable, very warm-hearted people. I will say they mainly speak Italian, so you might need to brush up on that before you go, but you will not be disappointed. Just beautiful, absolutely beautiful.

Then I would say South Africa. Love it. Can you tell I'm just picking wine places right now? Third is not a wine place. It probably should have been, but that's because I need to go to more wine places so I can collect them. So, I'd say the South of Italy, South Africa, and I love Singapore. They're food places too. If it's not wine, it's food. They're the places that are going to get me.

**Matt Bowles:** I fully understand that. I think those are amazing picks. All right, Lovelda top three bucket list destinations. These are places you have not yet been highest on your list. You'd most like to see.

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** Okay. Great wall of China. Never been. Love the idea of it. So that would be one of them.

The second would be Niagara Falls. I struggled with this. Like I'd love Niagara Falls, and I love the Grand Canyon. So, they kind of came in like, I was like, eh, Niagara Falls just picked it just a little bit causes it's waterfalls, but I love nature. So, any kind of natural phenomenon, I'm like always kind of leading into them because I just think it's kind of cool.

And the third has been on my list for a little while. I just want to go to Greece. Only because I keep seeing those fricking Instagram pictures and now, I want to go. That's it. That's the only reason. I just want to be there. They've sucked me in that now I want to be one of those people. I want that photo with all of the white buildings with the blue roofs behind me. I'm that person now. They got me. Social media, see what it does.

**Matt Bowles:** All right. Lovelda, we have now come to the most important question of this podcast interview. You and I are from a very similar era. We grew up in the golden era of hip-hop and we have a deep and abiding appreciation for that musical art form.

And so, as the final question of this podcast, I'm going to ask you to name your top five hip-hop emcees of all time. But before I do that, can you just share a little bit about what hip hop means to you and why you love the genre?

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** It's the rhythm. It's the beat. So hip-hop was so big when I was at university and I spent most of my time in the clubs, not getting drunk. I used to get drunk before I arrived and then go home sober because I couldn't be bothered to queue because people queue so long at the bar. I couldn't be bothered with that. I just wanted to listen to the music.

And in the UK, where I went to uni. You'd have your pop clubs and your hip-hop clubs. I just ignored all the pop. I went straight back to hip-hop. So, when I hear those, I've got a massive birthday coming up this year and I'm just really wanting to lean into my hip-hop roots. It's my happy place.

**Matt Bowles:** I love that. And as you know, I was a hip-hop DJ in the nineties, and I came up during all of that stuff as well. And it is very near and dear to my heart.

So Lovelda, we're going to close this podcast interview out with you naming your top five hip hop emcees of all time. Go ahead.

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** Okay. Caviar in no particular order because I don't want nobody getting mad. I just wrote names down and it took writing and scribbling and writing and scribbling to get it down to five Matt.

It's mean. It's a mean, mean question, but I got you an answer, right? So, I've got Jay Z. He's on there. Amazing hits. DMX. Miss DMX. Too many good hits. Too many good hits. Then I've got Dr. Dre, because what was Dr. Dre not involved in? Involved in everything. Notorious B. I. G. enough said. And then I absolutely had to put a woman in there, because it would have been wrong not to.

And the only woman that really nailed it for me had to be Missy Elliott.

**Matt Bowles:** I love that top five. That is amazing. We're going to drop the mic, close it out with that Lovelda. I want you to let folks know before we end this, how they can find you, how they can follow you on social media. For people that are interested in your speaker training, how they can learn more information about that and in general, how you would like people to come into your world?

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** Lots of different ways. If you want to connect with me, [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#) are my two social media platforms of choice, where you'll probably get the fastest response from me. On both of them, I'm Lovelda Vincenzi, which makes me super easy to find. Website [lovelda.com](#) also super easy to find. I got all the rights to the name quicker than anybody else.

If you're interested in really quickly diving in or having like a sampler of what it means to kind of grow your profile, go and check out [bookspeaker.co](#) or [paidtospeak.com](#) on there, you'll find two really compressed, exciting resource [Toolkit](#). So, cheat sheets and stuff that helps you with those things that I spoke about earlier in terms of building your profile, pricing your speaking engagements, that sort of thing.

But I mean, just come find me on socials and just say "Hi". Tell me you heard me. Speaking, having too much wine with Matt.

**Matt Bowles:** Amazing. We are going to link all of that up in one place. You can just go to [the show notes](#) at [themaverickshow.com](#). Go to [the show notes](#) for this episode. There you will find all of the ways to contact Lovelda as well as everything else we have discussed in this episode.

Lovelda, this was amazing. Thank you so much for coming on the show.

**Lovelda Vincenzi:** Thank you so much for having me. This has been fab, especially the wine bit. That's like my favorite.

**Matt Bowles:** That's my favorite thing too. I just meet smart, interesting people. And I'm like, want to have a bottle of wine together? Oh, and we can just turn on these mics and record the conversation so other people can listen in.

All right. Thank you, Lovelda. Good night, everybody.