# FINAL LOB EPS435 Lorraine Connell

[Liz Theresa]

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I'm your host, Liz Teresa, and I help you launch, build online businesses you love. This podcast is all about entrepreneurship and I hope you like it. Hey everybody and welcome to another episode of Liz on Biz.

Here with me today is Lorraine Connell. Welcome to the show, Lorraine. Thanks, Liz.

So glad to be here. I am stoked because I have had a Lorraine-filled week because we've got to see each other twice and I love seeing nice people more than once because, you know what I'm saying, sometimes in business you gotta see some people and you're like, God, this guy again. But today I don't feel that way about you.

So good. Same. Same-sies.

No, tell everybody a little bit about the work that you do.

[Lorraine Connell]

Well, there's a lot, but really I want to talk today a little bit about the work that I'm doing with Speak Boldly Showcase where I am working with women who are typically not the women who would be standing on stage and sharing or talking and I give them an opportunity to walk a speaker journey and walk the story journey. And so there's so many ways that you can start that journey and I think so many of us are like, well, I'm not a public speaker or I would never do something like that. And so it's finding that avenue in to say, well, maybe.

What would happen if I did?

[Liz Theresa]

Ooh, yes. Well, and so what kinds of women are the people that come? Because you said women that don't traditionally get to share their story.

So what kinds of women have got to do speaking?

[Lorraine Connell]

Well, Liz, I guess there's really no woman that is like my ideal person, except honestly, I think it's the woman who doesn't know that the things that have happened in their lives have really shaped them to doing the work. And so I will open the door to any person, but it does typically land better when it's a woman who's doing good work in business, because often the reason we're doing what we're doing is because of something that has happened to us along our journey. And really, I was finding because my work originated with teenagers, so 12 to 16 year olds.

And I was seeing when I was asking women, like, tell me who you were as a teenager. What experience happened? We were finding a direct link to the work that they were doing today was connected to something that was like happening as a teenager.

[Liz Theresa]

I am that because when I was a teenager, I did plays, right? And I was very good. I was so good, in fact, that I went to Stonehill and I became the president of the Stonehill Theater Company.

I was so good at plays. And I was a very good actor. And of all the things I did, my mom, who's gone, would say that I was best at acting and art, which is drawing and all the stuff I do now, really like graphics.

And she said, you were so good. But what's remarkable about this journey is that when you don't get the part, right, is crushing. And when I graduated, I was among, I would say, excellent actors.

And so and I mean, even in the girls category, there are probably four or five of us in my class that were amazing. But that meant that there's never four or five leads, like very rarely. And so we were always going up for the same roles.

And then I felt I and I would get shafted a lot. Like I didn't always get shafted, but I got shafted a lot more than them for whatever reason. I didn't fit it or it wasn't a right whatever.

And so that but that's crushing. And then I went to college and I still pursued theater. And of course, similar things would happen.

But I mean, I actually did really a lot better at the college level. I competed better and got really good parts. I got to compete actually in an acting competition, which was interesting.

But what I noticed is it's that crushing blow of like, you're not good enough. And I even interned at a casting studio where they like, I realized like when I had to be the person to tell somebody or watch somebody be told you're not good enough for the part, I worked at a casting studio and I was like, I can't work in a business where you are not good enough. I have to make people I want to feel like I'm good enough.

And that's the whole be the star, you know, you are stuff because it's like, I want you to feel like you're the star of your business, that there is nobody better at what you do than you. And I'm

going to give you the tools to help you feel more confident. But that but that's like, so what it is, because but it started.

Ding, ding, ding. It's crazy. Yes.

So what's your story? Did you have a teenage story?

[Lorraine Connell]

Yeah. Yeah, I was. I knew that I could do more.

I knew it inside of my heart. And I was watching all of these other really smart, really successful. Everybody else was better at this or that or this.

And I like I was just average. And actually, that was when I did my TEDx. That was going to be my talk was the man just and how I put just in front of all of these things.

Yeah, to protect myself. But I, I wanted somebody to say, Hey, Lorraine, you can do this. And I kept waiting for somebody else to tell me that.

And so when I became a teacher, I saw all of my students the same way I was like, Okay, so we've got these really exceptional kids, the top 10%. If I'm being generous. Yeah, everything.

And then there was like, the 90% of us who were like, well, what about us? And so I was watching my own students be like, Yeah, no, I'm not. I can't do this.

No, I can't do that. And I was like, why not? You know why?

Yeah, because there wasn't enough space for everyone. And so I was like, Oh, I got to change that. So I left teaching to create the leadership program for me as a teenager.

So it's like, I pick the kids who are like, no, not me, right? So they're looking behind you when you're saying no, no, no, you I want you to come in. And the kiddos who are right, they're just disruptive.

They're kind of like annoying. And you're like, Oh, if I could just get them out of my class, everything would be fine. And I'm like, come be with me.

And I taught them I we played games. And honestly, my my best experience was a little over a year ago, I was working at this student who was like standing in the back and he was like, and I really Yeah, he put his guard up because I was calling him a leader and no one in his life, home, school, no one saw him that way. And so he was afraid that if he stepped into that role, he would do something wrong, and I would take it away.

Oh, and so like, Oh, right. So it took him a really long time to like, step in and say, Okay, but like,

every time we were playing a game, he would be like, I kind of want to play. And so I was like, I never kept him out.

I never I was like, the invitation is here. Play how you want. And then he, he became an eighth grader.

So like seventh grade was really powerful. And so he became a grader. And I asked him and the rest of the kids to go teach those games to the sixth graders.

And he like, became a different kid.

[Liz Theresa]

Whoa, my God, though, my goose like, just like, because these are the kids that like, it's so it's so formative what we learn about ourselves and what we believe that we are capable of. At that juncture, that six, I would say sixth grade, seventh grade, eighth grade, the awkwardest time of life, but it's so that's where you're like, where do I fit in the world kind of a time of your life? Like, am I am I cool?

Am I a loser? And what am I and that's just Oh, he needed that. Do you still run that program?

Do you still?

[Lorraine Connell]

Yeah, I moved but I create like that is my signature program. And if I and it solves like a million problems in schools, I like can't even tell you like, teachers are burnout, right? Because they have so much stuff on their plate.

This program, I feel for it off their plate. It makes them feel like they can actually play and have fun with kids. And so that connection is built.

When like, there's this thing called advisory in school, and teachers are like, forced to make connections and make relationships. And we're like, yeah, I don't like, how do I do that? Because I we just do it naturally.

So we don't really know. Right. This takes me out of the expert role and allows me to just play.

And, and again, like this child, I can play the way I want to play. There's no rules. And that like, and actually, a lot of my games have like very limited rules.

And so it's kind of like setting you up to just like, figure out the right rise to the occasion. It gives you somewhere to go. Yeah.

And I was, I was like, I had been doing this for about five, four and a half years. And when I

started that program with that student and those cohorts, I was like, no, this, this is it. This is the, this is the special sauce.

And I also had been selected to do a TEDx. And like I said, I had started with the just, but then I realized, no, I need to tell. That's a story.

[Liz Theresa]

Yeah. Well, and that's in stories, because it's almost like the justice, the justice is so relatable, by the way. But the justice, there would be a series of stories or threads that you could thread together to make a just story.

But this is a story story. And sometimes I think like, well, like when I think about if I'm going to speak somewhere, right? Is my story enough?

That's a question, you know, and you think about, and like, are you here to tell women that our stories are enough?

[Lorraine Connell]

Yeah. And actually, like, I, I'm, so when I was selected to do the TED, I had been in a space with somebody who said, I need to practice. Can I come to your networking meeting to practice?

And I was like, why do I need to, like, find people to invite me in? What if I created, like, a platform for people to just come share? And like, that's, it became Speak Boldly, but I knew enough women who had applied to TED and got rejected.

And I was like, but you have such a cool story. Can you, will you come join me? And so February 2026, I was practicing my TEDx.

And I had invited five other women to share their rejected TEDx. Wow. There's just, you know, again, this is the problem.

There's not enough space at the top. And I'm finding that the same is true with Speak Boldly, right? I can't, I can't accept everybody now.

I can't accept everybody. But I don't know how, like, I want to create a space that's not like, no, it's just not yet. Right?

[Liz Theresa]

Yeah.

[Lorraine Connell]

So like, if you're not selected to be on the four stages that I'm going to have in 2027, how do I

keep you from feeling like Lorraine said no to me?

[Liz Theresa]

Like you got rejected.

[Lorraine Connell]

I'm not good enough. Yeah. Right.

So like, what's the next, what's the other alternative? And so that's where the business, which is literally eight months old, is starting to find its legs because every freaking woman has a story that they need to share because when they share it, it takes that burden from carrying it. Yeah, that's true.

Shame into being like, oh, there are other people nodding their head when I say that. I'm not alone. What the hell?

I am not alone. And so like, if I had my druthers and I could like, snap my fingers and make this happen right now, this would be happening for middle school girls who at that very age is where that competition and cutting people out begins because That's true. we're afraid that we're the only one and we can't let anyone know that we're feeling this way.

So I'm going to push you all away. I'm going to pick you out so that this group is mine. I mean, it's like, yeah, and I'm looking at it.

I'm like, oh, this was happening everywhere. Yeah. In my life, right?

And the talk that I gave, I actually, so February, I spoke April, I spoke again. And in April, it didn't feel the same. And I was like, I don't belong on the stage anymore because I've done it.

Now I need to step aside. And then my original group was like, we need to take our show on the road. And so we planned another one for October.

And I did take the stage again in October, but I used it in a very different way. I wanted to talk about how I created Speak Boldly and those rooms because I didn't think I belonged. And I created a community because I needed to learn that it's not about you inviting me in.

It's about me feeling like I belong. And so that was my talk in October where, you know, I grew up thinking I didn't have friends. I saw me walking into a room that I cultivated like Speak Boldly and feel like, how could I not feel like I was in a room full of friends?

But it was all because it was like this story, this messaging in my head that told me I didn't belong. So I had to find that belonging inside. And when I found my own belonging, I allowed to create belonging for other people.

[Liz Theresa]

It's beautiful. I mean, stories are, well, there's one thing, it unburdens the speaker and it takes away the shame. But then the other effect of it, too, is that it helps the women that get to hear the story, know that they're not alone in that struggle or that story.

And that we all have these things playing over and over and over again, you know, in your head. You can get to yourself and say, I have nothing. I have no friends.

It's so easy to slip away. I mean, at least I know I have spun out and been like, no one really cares. No one really wants me there.

My story is not good enough.

[Lorraine Connell]

There's not enough space that just keeps showing up everywhere. My story is not good enough or nobody would care. Nobody cares.

Yeah. And that actually that's the woman that I want. Right.

It's the one that says it's not enough. Nobody really cares about me or my story, because I will tell you that every time somebody takes the stage and shares a story, there's a thread that connects to you and me and everyone else. Yeah.

It's not my story, but there's a thread in that story that connects. There's a lot of tears that come. There's a lot of laughter that comes.

There's a lot of connection. It's changed the way I network. Like networking for me when I first started my business was scary.

Like I didn't want to walk into a room of people I didn't know. Now that I go in and I have these calls and I'm like, so tell me, tell me why you're doing the work that you're doing. Yeah, it's the best work.

And it allows me to remember you in a way that you telling me I do social media marketing or I tell you, you know, it doesn't that doesn't stay in my head the way your stories that you have shared with me. Yes. Stay.

I mean, yeah, we're sharing about, you know, the star and acting. I thought of three new people that I wanted to connect with you. Oh, awesome.

Of that that background, right? Yes. Three women that I know who are like, I used to act and I loved it.

And I did. Or I'm fine. I want to find a place.

And like, that's where the connection starts. It's not about, oh, I need you to market for me or I need you to do my website. It's about like, I just want you in my life, Liz.

[Liz Theresa]

Yes. Yes. I always want you in my life.

No. And I think that that even just taking away what you just said about networking, because sometimes when people think networking, you're thinking about working. You know what I mean?

While you're networking. And it's so much more about knowing the human and being human and sharing in the experience of being human with another person that happens to do business stuff. But that's not the most important thing about them.

The most important thing is how you how they make you feel. What is that? No, I'll remember the things you said.

No one will remember the things you did, but everyone remembers the way you made them feel. Maya Angelou.

[Lorraine Connell]

Yeah. She is my person. She is my my rock.

Yeah. And my guide, you know, like when I gear off, I'm like, no, how did I make that person feel?

[Liz Theresa]

Oh. And then thinking about Speak Boldly as a business, like you said, it's a young business. But what does the business side look like?

Like, how do people how do you make money and how do people give you money? Do you want some? So good.

[Lorraine Connell]

Actually, I spent about three weeks just like a week and a half ago feeling like I couldn't make money at this business. Right. Because I was in this space of like, but I just want to do good and who do good work.

They don't make money. And then I had to really wrestle with that belief. Yeah, that's a story.

Yes. And so I decided that I wasn't going to let that message stop me because I do want to really good work and money will help me do that. Yeah.

So we are we are in the process of thinking forward. And I added an application to speaking. And so people who want to get on my podcast, Speak Boldly, the podcast, which, Liz, was a just a recorded event.

There's an application fee now. Right. And for a long time, I resisted that because I was like, I just want to get your story out there.

Will that woman say no because there's a fifteen dollar charge? And I was like, again, done with that. Right.

I have the power to say, no, Liz, really go ahead and fill the application out. Don't let that limiting belief stop you. Yes.

And so that's one way that I've added more money. I shifted because, again, I was feeling like, OK, I'm going to only host four in twenty seven. I hosted six in twenty.

Oh, wow. Yeah. And they all sold out.

We have one final one, November 5th. And I know this is going to come after that. But like we are aiming for a hundred tickets, which is beyond anything that I've run.

And I know it's a long shot. I only have two weeks left.

[Liz Theresa]

Yeah. I'm like, OK, am I close? Are you getting there?

You're at 40. I guessed 40 in my head because two weeks. But there's a lot of last minute Larry's that could tick it up to 80.

[Lorraine Connell]

Yeah.

[Liz Theresa]

From 40.

[Lorraine Connell]

And it was very interesting to me in September. I had sold September out in like July. And I was like, what happened?

And I don't and I don't because I haven't done all the data collection and my my my people around me are like, you've got to collect the data. So anyway, I did six this year and that was too much. And in October and November, I was competing with other events.

[Liz Theresa]

Yeah.

[Lorraine Connell]

So it's like, OK, so November's out for twenty twenty seven. That's not a good month to run it. And I would.

[Liz Theresa]

Yeah.

[Lorraine Connell]

I was like, OK, if I'm going to do November, I want to do it early because I don't want Thanksgiving and the holidays. So like I'm trying to make really smart choices. Yes.

And so the showcases don't make money. They're a big loss because I want to pay people what they're worth. And if I do that, I'm looking at ten thousand dollars worth of a cost for an event for like 50.

So do you pay the speakers? So here's the cat.

[Liz Theresa]

Yeah.

[Lorraine Connell]

Right. Like, yes, I want speakers to know that they are worth being paid. Right.

So many of these women are doing it for the first time. And if I say I'm going to pay you, all of a sudden that limiting belief of like, oh, no, then I can't do it. Right.

[Liz Theresa]

No, I think that's true. Well, I'm also like, in my opinion. Well, so if you if you want to know what I'm thinking, if I owned your company, I would have it be I like the podcast application fee, but I'm also like I feel like there should be if like you should consider having people.

Well, I don't know if you're going to do this, but like, do you have like a program people can pay to learn how to craft their speech and did it? That's coming.

[Lorraine Connell]

I do. That's two really great women on my team who are one is a speaker agent. So after you've done this and you're like, oh, fuck, yeah, I'm a good guy.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Do this. You go work with Ashley Riel and you like get on her radar and she helps you find the spaces.

But I also have women who are speaking or are wanting to speak, but they haven't quite created the scar yet. So it's still a little bit of a wound. And so I have a woman on my team, Victoria Carrington Chavez, who helps you navigate some of the emotional baggage that's like stuck and helps you move that forward so that when you do share, you're not bleeding out on the audience.

Yes. So, yes, in 27, maybe like mid to late 27, I'm creating a heart and soul program for your story. So yeah, heart and soul of your story.

And so that is something that is coming. But I haven't created it. Right.

Eight months. I'm not even a year old yet.

[Liz Theresa]

And I can't even. This is what I think you're doing so good for not being a year old. You've sold out an event already.

So that's why I'm like, but I'm so I never here's what here's what's interesting. I never tell people to pay to play, however, but that's because I'm probably spoiled on having done this a while. However, if you are doing all of the legwork, all of the promotion, gathering an audience, getting a venue, maybe there's hors d'oeuvres.

I have no idea. You're doing all of that. Do you know what I'm saying?

That all is happening. It's it's almost like so I paid for this thing. OK, this is a good analogy for you.

I paid for this thing. It was the best thing ever. It was called the empowering women thing with South Shore Home Life and Style.

All women should do this if you live on the South Shore. And basically you pay to be empowering, which sounds hilarious. Yeah.

Right. Yeah. But I paid it.

It was like two thousand dollars. I got a full page article about me in the magazine. I got a photo shoot with an amazing, amazing photographer who's still my number one photographer who captures me, Sarah Henshie.

And you got to go to a networking event with all the other empowering women. And then I made

like one of my longtime clients I'd met at the empowering like she's like a longtime friend client now. And so it's like, but I paid for that.

And I don't think that that's so different. You know what I'm saying? Well, as far as leveraging a way to position yourself.

Yes. And to find it should be application, application and money. Like you should still apply because not everybody should be allowed to be empowering and not everybody should be allowed to be on in the showcase, perhaps for any reason.

I don't know why. Maybe they could be a nut bird and they're just not a fit.

[Lorraine Connell]

Well, I think, again, it's like, where are you on that journey? Right. Like you may have a really great story, but you haven't healed from it.

And I learned a lot of this through the Speak Boldly. I had a woman like reach out to me right afterwards. And she was like, I didn't feel great.

I felt like I had a vulnerability hangover. And I was like, oh, I need to I need to find a way to support women regardless of what they feel the next day, because the first one, we all felt like a hundred percent. We were like, oh, my God, let's keep going.

And then the second one, I had a woman who said, like, I didn't feel great. And so we put supports in place. We now have like a follow up meeting the very next day for us all to come back together and share and feel it.

Like, I will tell you, the night after my first Speak Boldly, my husband, the next day, my husband was like, if you tell me that story one more time. And I was like, you don't want to hear this. This is amazing.

So you need somebody who gets it. Yeah. Isn't like overwhelmed.

Which is why like and and like just to go back to like you pay your speakers. I also don't want to put a value on anybody's story.

[Liz Theresa]

No, it's weird, right? Yeah. Yeah, it's weird.

But I'm but I think they get I think it's so much that you're providing so much value that I wouldn't even I think that it's like you should be so lucky. Yes. Not to be a jerk about it.

But it's a that's such a massive value.

[Lorraine Connell]

It is a massive value. And it's more than just a business value. It's a personal.

Oh, yeah. Yeah. I had a client who are done.

Yeah. You feel like you could do anything. I mean, that's that's the power of doing something that it scares the shit out of you.

Right. Like anybody who's listening who is like, I could never speak. And then you get up on stage and you do it.

[Liz Theresa]

You're like, oh, well, then nothing can stop. And now you can do it. What struggle my at my gym class today is going to take us to our last question.

But at my gym class, my the guy said struggle leads to progress. Struggle opens up possibility for progress. And that's like if I change the weight.

Right. And it's harder. But like in work, if you do things that are hard, you're only going to grow and get better.

And that thing that was very hard, it's not going to be hard forever. Like you have a speaker muscle, probably.

[Lorraine Connell]

Yeah, you yeah, you have a confidence muscle, you have a leadership. Everything we think we can't do is literally a muscle. And that comes back to my training with kids is that zone of comfort.

Like, yeah, it's easy. You're not learning if you're running out of the room or you're freezing or you're fighting. You're not learning either.

But somewhere in the middle. You can build that muscle.

[Liz Theresa]

Okay, so for your last question, I want you to be speaking directly to folks listening that are like, you know, I think I have a story, but I'm not sure because it doesn't pertain to my business. Is this story worth telling?

[Lorraine Connell]

Actually, you know, I think for me, the stories that we have that are not pertaining to our business are way more important than the stories about our business. And when a woman says to me, I

don't have a story, I often ask, like, I know there's a story about why you started your business. And then they're like, oh, well, yeah, there's a story behind that.

And so it's like all of those, like, just the prompting the question I ask that gets somebody to think about, oh, I actually have a lot of stories. Which one should I share?

[Liz Theresa]

I love that. And then you get to witness that in others. That is incredibly cool.

Lorraine, tell everybody how they can find you online and connect with you.

[Lorraine Connell]

Well, Speak Boldly Showcase on Instagram is where I like blast all the exciting stuff that we're doing with Speak Boldly. But if you're interested in sharing a story or you want to come to an event in 2027, speakboldlyshowcase.com. There is a link for share your story and you can see all the different pathways.

Maybe you just want to come network with other women who are on that speaker journey. We meet once a month. It's just coming in and being in community with other women on that journey.

[Liz Theresa]

Awesome. That's amazing. I will be checking that out.

Lorraine, thank you so much for joining us today. Thanks so much for having me. Thanks so much for listening today.

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