

**Audio Title: Weeze**

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### Transcript

**Rebekah Borucki:** Hello, neighbor! Welcome to our third season of *The Book Stoop*.

And if you are new here, let me help you get to where you're going.

So, you're gonna go past the corner of bodega and down the block from the fresh cuts barbershop, and there you'll find a brick row house at the intersection of Literature Place and Social Justice Blvd. That's where you will find our stoop.

Our host, Amanda Lytle, will be there to welcome you to the conversation. *The Book Stoop* is the place for the hottest takes on book culture, nerd culture, current events, with best-selling authors, change-makers, and risk-takers – our favorite people.

And I'm Rebekah Borucki, President of Row House Publishing. Now, come on in and meet Amanda.

**Amanda Lytle:** Thanks, Bex. Hey, friend. Let me be the second to welcome you to our spot, *The Book Stoop*. I feel incredibly honored to be the host of this podcast and I'm so grateful to have you here. Today on *The Book Stoop*, I'm speaking with Weeze, Louiza Doran, known and referred as "Weeze" is a cis-het Amazigh\* female identifying human who uses she, her, they, and them pronouns. She is known as a coach, a podcast host, advocate, agent of change, speaker, strategist, healing-centered educator, and guide to name a few but is ultimately a compassionate provocateur who is out to help folks uncover their path of possibility through liberation by way of decolonization, justice, and anti-oppression work.

In the conversation today, we start with some of Weeze's reflections and takeaways from a recent read, *Pleasure Activism*. We then move into the background of the idea of deconstruction to reconstruction of one's identity through the healing and coming home to oneself.

Weeze shares some personal stories about redefining and reshaping her identity and her mission to protect her peace while helping support others to do the same.

Before we jump in, I want to invite you to share *The Book Stoop* with your community. If you are loving this podcast, grab a screenshot and tag us on Instagram @rowhousepub. Every share, 5-star rating, and written review helps us find more listeners and climb the charts. So we are super grateful for your help.

We start our chats on *The Book Stoop* with a rather fitting question, so what are you reading these days?

**Louiza “Weeze” Doran:** So you know, actually, nothing. No. Normally, I’m a huge reader and you’re probably like, “Why are you on here?” So I actually just underwent double eye surgery three weeks ago yesterday. And so for the past well over a year, I’ve been very severely visually impaired. I was born with a congenital eye defect, and I’ve been rapidly losing vision since I was born. And so yeah, for the last year and a half, I was faking it pretty good like nobody really knew because I’ve been learning to adapt since I was literally in kindergarten.

But one of the things that went with that was my ability to read and everyone was like, “Oh, but you should like listen to audiobooks.” But I’m very much – I’m not like audio averse obviously. I have podcast. I’m on a podcast. But there is something about the ritual of picking out a book and feeling the pages and writing in the margins and bending over the corners and smelling it and like opening the front cover, back cover, middle, and like creasing it, that is part of my like reading process, right? Reading is as peace and healing. So I just like couldn’t do audiobooks. I couldn’t do it.

So I actually have not read a book in a very, very long time. I think the last one that I could – I managed to get through and it was still fairly difficult was *Pleasure Activism*. But yeah, other than that, I unfortunately have not read a book in a long time, but I will be able to start reading again here shortly and I’m very excited.

**Amanda Lytle:** I bet.

**Louiza “Weeze” Doran:** Yeah.

**Amanda Lytle:** I can totally feel the vibes on the reading ritual and actually picking up a book. I know that even for myself, it took me so long to adapt to listening to books, but I think my favorite about listening is when you actually have an author reading the book. I think that’s pretty much – it has to be. That’s the benchmark. If it isn’t this way, I can’t listen to it.

**Louiza “Weeze” Doran:** Yeah. Yeah. There’s something about it.

**Amanda Lytle:** One of the books that you just recently read, *Pleasure Activism*, I’ve just recently started and so I’m so curious about yeah, what was one of your biggest takeaways from that?

**Louiza “Weeze” Doran:** You know, the reason that I love the book is obviously, there are so many different voices in it but this idea of one, pleasure obviously – well, I mean I shouldn’t say obviously. In my world, it’s obvious, right? But pleasure being much more than just an act of intimacy or an act – like sexual pleasure like pleasure being derived from so many different places, right? Even going on the train, a vision in sight now that I’m regaining vision like being able to see colors in a way that I never could before like the deep joy and pleasure that that is giving me, being able to see like the intricacies of leaves that I had never been able to see before, right? I’m just like – like my brain is constantly blown with just like moments of like child-like joy of like, “Dude, nature is so cool. Look how pretty the sand is.”

**Amanda Lytle:** Wow!

**Louiza “Weeze” Doran:** So I really, really loved that concept. It gave me language around something that I was kind of like searching for in this like, “How do we talk about the joy that we get in a way that feels really authentic?” And for a while, it was like, well, maybe pleasure doesn’t go right because socially it has been scripted as something very specific. But just that permission slip of like just because other people might not get it, talk about it in the way that feels right for you. So, I really loved that element of it.

**Amanda Lytle:** You just said something where it says, just about talking about things and even really the power of communication, the power of voice. I think of so much of what you do and what you represent or the space that you’re holding online has a lot to do with boundary setting but also with the deconstruction and reconstruction of a lot of your identity. And knowing a bit about your story, having spoken in the past, I feel like that segues so beautifully into a lot of the work that you’re doing as it is with that deconstruction, reconstruction, anti-oppression work, decolonization work. So I mean that’s so open-ended. I have many questions I could take out of there, but I feel like I just kind of want to open that door for you and just tell us a bit about what you do.

**Louiza “Weeze” Doran:** Yeah. So it’s funny deconstructing and reconstructing, I’m actually in a phase of that. I always say it comes in seasons. We have to give ourselves permission to constantly evolve. I have an ethos. It’s written on a post-it note on a wall in my room that says, “The moment that you commit to being stagnant is the moment that you commit to your own death.”

And I know that sounds like super morbid but what that really comes from and what that means to me is that we have to have a commitment. We don’t have to. I have to have. I choose to have. The people that work with me have a commitment to constantly being open to evolving, to waking up every day and wanting to be a fuller, brighter, not better necessarily, but a fuller, brighter, richer, more joyful, rested, peaceful version of themselves.

And so, it comes in seasons, right? We have seasons that stretch us. We have seasons where we settle into it. We have seasons where we and I’m sure other business owners can attest to this, but like you want to throw the whole business away and start all over.

And so right, I’m really in that season of even deconstructing the way that people have seen me previously. My work has actually always been about liberation, personal liberation, because I believe that in our own individual liberation, we liberate others, right? So liberation of all and the collective by way of individual liberation.

And May 2020 really pigeon-holed me into talking specifically about white supremacy and antiracism, which are so fundamentally crucial to liberation and liberation theology and ideology. But that’s not what liberation is all about. That’s not – and that’s certainly not the work. I’ve always said like I’m not antiracist educator like that is actually not what I do. It is an

element of the work that I teach. It is an element of the work that I do in this world. It is an element of the ways in which I choose to disrupt. But that's actually now what I do.

And then obviously because of great wide awakening and the social unrest that was happening really globally that started in the summer of 2020, because that's what everyone was looking for and because I am also very vocal and very committed to using my voice and using the privilege of my ambiguity and all of those other things, but I was just really a loud voice in the room. And because I've been doing this work and had been doing this work well before 2020, so for me it was like well, I mean yeah, this is what we need to be talking about right now because this is the collective need, and I can meet this need. But it's not all that I do.

And so now, I find myself in a season of reconstructing – of deconstructing the kind of corner that I was backed into in terms of what I talk about, how I talk about it, who I'm talking to so to speak, and really reclaiming and coming home to myself in terms of like the work that I do, and so reconstructing the courses and the spaces and the things and the way that I'm talking about things.

So even just a simple fact of like I'm actually no longer interested in talking about antiracism so to speak and instead, I am more interested in talking about framing it from the perspective of liberation, right? Like I'm not interested in talking about oppression and framing things from a stance of oppression, I'm interested in talking about healing and framing things from a stance of liberation and even just how linguistically that shift makes such a large impact and difference, but it also is so much more authentic to who I am and the work that I've always done.

So, all of that contextually to say I think the reason that I'm capable of doing this is speaking to kind of what you said like the fact that I do look at deconstructing identity and reconstructing and all of those things is I really hold it under the umbrella of liberation. We have all been socialized into identity performance. We have all been taught that the way to find worth, love, acceptance, community, "success," all of these other things is if we look at all of our identities, right?

So everything, gender, race, nationality, religion, socio-economic status, like every single box that we like to put people in. And if we figure out, well, how I do perform that identity box to not only the best of my ability but to the way that has been prescribed? Like what is the script for this identity?

Now, all of those scripts are informed yes, by whiteness and white supremacy, but also, the patriarchy and the gender binary and white nationalism, and so many other things. But the work that I do is really focused on helping individuals and the collective find a way to really redefine the ways in which they are "performing" that identity.

What parts of the script feel authentic to them, what parts of script feel like they kind of dim your light, what parts of the script feel totally inauthentic, and you want to reject every single piece of them? It's like wearing a wool sweater that just itches and scratches and you're like, "I literally hate this, but everyone keeps telling me I'm supposed to wear it because it's warm." Right?

And finding ways to take those elements off and put on, maybe it's the cashmere or maybe it's cotton blend or whatever the thing is. But put on something else and rewrite your own script or borrow scripts from others that are doing it in ways that feel really good to you and really authentic because ultimately at the end of the day, if we are not constantly striving, this is again, trust my – in my opinion, right?

But if we are not constantly striving to find a way to live a life that allows us to have access to a full array of human emotions and meet our needs with regards to rest, joy, financial success ability, you all get to define these things however you see fit. That's kind of the point. But like taking a step every single day to living in that version of whatever your best life is and your best self is. Like if we are not doing that then like what's the point? Like really, what's the point?

And so, that's why protecting your peace for example is such a cornerstone of my work. I first started talking about it publicly, Trudi Lebron who you all know well, and I have a podcast called That's Not How That Works. And episode 18 of that podcast is literally called Protect Your Peace. Yeah. I told Trudi, I was like, "We need to do an episode about this." She was like, "OK!" Shout out, Trudi. Love her dearly.

But I've been talking about this for a really long time because I feel like it really encapsulates the work that I do because we all want to be able to feel the peace and ease and a sense of home in our own bodies. But in order to do that, we have to learn how to navigate a society that is predicated on our constant internal turmoil. Right?

So how do you do that? Well, you need boundaries, you need self-love, you need to repattern all sorts of narratives around self-worth and perfectionism and hyper-productivity and all of the shoulds and woulds and supposed tos based on all of your identities. We got to repattern those things. We got to look at them and then once we figured out what feels like home for me, what brings my spirit peace, what brings my spirit joy and ease, how do I then learn to navigate the world and what skillsets do I need to ensure that as I'm navigating the world, I'm maintaining my safety and I'm also teaching other people simultaneously how I want them to engage with me so that I can maintain the sense of home.

**Amanda Lytle:** That has a lot to do with the back and forth I think of natural curiosity and asking questions like constantly staying open and being ready to make mistakes in the process. But I think that that's what so special about the spaces that you're creating and the platform that you've got is because you've established this space where you are essentially demonstrating how you want to be treated, how you want to be received. And I think that is one of the most powerful things that immediately comes across in your space.

**Louiza "Weeze" Doran:** Oh, thank you.

**Amanda Lytle:** Yeah. No, absolutely. I think I wanted to come back to the humanity aspect of this too because ...

**Louiza “Weeze” Doran:** Yeah.

**Amanda Lytle:** ... the array of emotions that one experiences again with all of these systems of oppression, we are rarely allowed to experience the most authentic emotion in a moment.

**Louiza “Weeze” Doran:** Yeah.

**Amanda Lytle:** So I’m curious about what does protecting your peace look like on a daily basis in practice for you?

**Louiza “Weeze” Doran:** Yeah. I mean it looks like a lot of different things at any given moment. But just like on any average day, I have a practice of what I call like my daily inventory. So I wake up first thing in the morning and this is something that like I teach clients but it’s like I literally check in with myself first and foremost before I let the day get at me and let anything else kind of like engage with me or just kind of energetically cross frequency so to speak. I’m just like, “Yo! How am I feeling today? Did I sleep well? How does my body feel? How does my spirit feel? What do I need today to feel however it is that I have decided I need to or want to feel today?” And that’s the first thing that I do.

I have learned over time that that means not speaking to people before 10 AM. And I don’t mean like generally no one. Like my partner and I, we like wake up, we walk the dog, we have coffee together. That’s part of our morning ritual. But in terms of like work, working, and like being productive, I don’t want to talk to anyone before 10.

My team doesn’t start working until 10. Clients can’t even access me until 10:30 on my calendar. It’s just not happening because I want to be able to wake up early, walk my dog, do my thing, have time with my partner before the day gets involved, and he goes off and does his thing. I want to be able to enjoy my coffee nice and slow. Right?

And then I want to be able to like go through emails very leisurely and then set up my workday or set up whatever part of me needs to go be productive. Right? I need that. And I know that 10 AM is my sweet spot. If I can have all the spaciousness in the morning before 10 AM hits and then by the time 10 AM hits, I’m like, “Let’s do this!” I’m very excited to talk to my clients and my team and all the other things. So they are actually getting the most lit up, human-filled like excited version of Weeze.

So it’s definitely a matter of like learning yourself and knowing what you need and then giving yourself that. And obviously for folks who maybe don’t work for themselves or have kids or whatever the case maybe, like that might not be an option. But where can you find the things that you need? Right? Like a lot of it and this is why I always come back to boundaries, a lot of it is learning that you can have boundaries with other people all day long but if you don’t have boundaries with yourself like that’s really cute. I love that you thought this was going to work for you. But it’s not, right?

**Amanda Lytle:** Yeah.

**Louiza “Weeze” Doran:** Because you can tell people, “Don’t email me after 5 PM. I’m clocking out.” But if you’re sitting there on your work computer doing whatever until midnight, well, it doesn’t really matter whether someone emails you or not. You are going to find some nonsense to do for work. Do you have the boundary with yourself? Have you learned how to have boundaries with yourself? Have you address the narratives exist inside of you that prevent you from having boundaries with yourself?

So I say all that because in a single day, I too have to combat that, right? So it’s like I can have that goal where it’s like I know this about myself. So not scheduling anything before 10 AM, that doesn’t mean that sometimes I don’t wake up and I don’t immediately think it’s 7:30 in the morning like, “I got to do this or I got to do that,” or whatever the case maybe. But I have a skillset. I have a toolkit that I’ve developed where then I can like check in with myself and be like, “No, girl, calm down.”

**Amanda Lytle:** Yeah.

**Louiza “Weeze” Doran:** Nothing needs to happen right now that can’t start at 10, right? And I can have that moment and come back to self so then I can start my day, right? Throughout my day, typically, at least once or twice a day, somebody tries me, somebody tests me in some sort of way whether it’s somebody who wants something in my inbox via DM or email that just must not know yet how I operate because they are new to this community space and having those moments where you either like feel a kind of way or you want to cuss somebody out or – but again, that toolkit. I just refer back to the toolkit.

And instead, it becomes an opportunity for leading with curiosity and grace like, “Hey, are you new to this space? If you are, no worries. This is actually how I operate. Can’t wait to see your email pop through in my inbox,” or whatever the case may be. Right? Throughout the workday, family, friends, partner, partner’s family, they are calling, they are texting, they need things, right? But I’m working and I’m the type where because of the work that I do and because basically, I do not take the responsibility of guiding people through a transformational process lately and so when I’m locked in with a client like I am locked in. Notifications are off, all the things. Right?

So even that through any given day, what does it look like? Or throughout the day rather, what does it look like to have to tell the people that you love dearly that yes, you show up for, you’re their person, like actually, you have to wait right now because I need to pay attention to this or I’m doing this. And I get that whatever you have going on feels really important to you. And how do I communicate that in a way that one, says, “I hear you. I’m here for you. And I’ll check back in in an hour when I’m available.”

But more importantly, and this is the part that I don’t want to skip over because a lot of times when people talk about boundaries or protecting your peace or being – or living a liberated life where we hear it from the perspective of I’ve already done it and so this is just what I do. People

see me doing me and they're like, "Oh my god! That's amazing! I want to do that." Yeah, absolutely.

And I had to put years of work to get here, right? I had to put in years of work to unpack the narrative that says, "Well, this person might be mad at me or this person ..." to address people-pleasing, "... this person might think I love them less or this person might think XYZ negative thing about me if I don't respond immediately even though in this moment I'm doing something else, I don't have capacity," like whatever the case may be.

I've been doing it for longer so it's a reflexive muscle and those things happen at the same time now, so I don't want to like just skip over that and make it sound like the work wasn't necessary or it was easy. But now, 2022, we can say like, "Yeah, I see a message come in. I'm not even looking at it." So I mean I was just giving you like the biggest examples that kind of like – that I run up on in any given day. But ...

**Amanda Lytle:** Yeah, I can – I appreciate you sharing that so much because I think so much of what you've said I can even feel within myself that yeah, it's one thing to say that you've done the work and whatever and try and help someone do it. But it's so much I think an ownership, just your own – holding yourself accountable and taking ownership of the work that you're doing like you've said, which has got me all excited because I have a question at the tip of my tongue that has to do with your own transformation journey because as someone as a huge support system that you've become and have stepped into that role helping people through their own transformation journey, their own healing journey, you've been through some mega journeys yourself when it comes to transformation.

So there's one in particular that coming back to the theme of deconstruction and reconstruction, your divorce holds a lot of what your transformation journey has and was and started. So can you kind of jump into there and tell us a little bit about how that has really been a part of the deconstruction/reconstruction for you?

**Louiza "Weeze" Doran:** Yeah. So god! It feels like a thousand and a half years ago now. Also, what is time, you know? 2015, yes, OK. Was it 2015? I got a divorce in 2015 and up until that point, I was the quintessential fill in the blank like what does it mean to be a woman? What does it mean to be a wife? What does it mean to be a daughter and a sister? Like fill in the blank.

As a wife, you're supposed to don't be barefoot and pregnant because it's not 1950 but wear shoes both to work and in the kitchen like that kind of like updated nonsense where it's like we are still really following all of the very archaic archetypes but like we try to make them look better because progress. [Laughs] For those that don't know, that was incredible sarcasm if that was not clear.

But yeah, so up until that point, I had really followed every single social script that had been passed down to me and not even because necessarily I had seen it modeled in my own life. I think that's a really important element that we don't talk about enough especially I see like in modern day parenting pedagogy, which again, another topic for another time. But this notion that



like if you parent in a certain kind of way or if you control the environment that somehow your children are not going to get messaging or messages from like elsewhere especially today with the internet in the way that it is.

But I had messages coming from all over, Hollywood and the media and other friends and other family members and teachers and you have messaging coming from everywhere. And the common themes in all of them always support the main ideology. Even if it may sound a little different or look a little different, it's still the same thing. And I had just drank the Kool-Aid for lack of a better term. I didn't know how not to. Mind you, I got my degrees in sociology. I had the background of studying Behavioral Science. I could intellectualize all of it. I knew why. But that's really different than unpacking it.

So leading up to 2015, I had followed every script for my identity down to like what does it mean to be successful. So like the goal is two kids and a white picket fence and the job that like you don't really necessarily like totally love but it pays really well and like you can keep climbing ladder and like first one in the office and last one to leave and like very A type like all of that. And I was profoundly unhappy. I just didn't know that I was unhappy because everybody else was kind of like equally frustrated and unhappy and we all complained about all of the same things and that it was so normalized because you all remember this is like right when IG started being a thing.

Up until that point, I just thought this was what you're supposed to do. Now granted, I've always done the work around racial justice and also justice from like late-stage capitalism and a lot of like political education and political activism. But I didn't quite yet have the language that I have now with regards to like full liberation. I knew it in my spirit. I knew it in my soul.

But I didn't see it modeled for me anywhere. There wasn't any literature that I had access to because at the time it was still very much like within the realm of academia. Maybe I had read bell hooks, obviously, tons and tons, Audre Lorde, like a lot of other authors who were speaking to this thing.

But again, like you can read all the things but if you don't have somebody that can help you navigate and move through and repattern and relearn and reconstruct and then have social evidence and proof that it is not only possible but viable, I mean it doesn't really matter what you know. It matters what you live and what you can experience. Right?

So, fast forward – not fast forward, rewind to the divorce, and I had two choices and I think I said this the last time that we spoke because this is really how I view it, in that moment I had two choices. I could allow my entire life, my future, everything that I was as I knew it to just fall apart and crumble because it's not something – no one gets married with the intention of getting divorced no matter what anyone thinks.

I had the choice of like letting it all fall apart and then kind of like Fabergé egg, gluing it back together, which I feel like a lot of us are rushed into doing. Or I could take that opportunity to say, "Everything that I thought I knew or understood is shattered and I'm actually going to be

reborn. I'm going to birth something new from this. I'm going to really heal and rebuild something brand new in its wake, in the ashes, in the dust if you will." I call it my Phoenix rising moment.

And so in that moment, I leaned into mentors. I leaned into therapy. I found that again, I think we find different versions of therapy that work for us. For me at the time, talk therapy was not really – wasn't doing it for me.

And so, I was doing a lot of somatic embodied work and then through that, found my way, an avenue into talk therapy but I had a lot of things, I had precursors to talk therapy and I say that because a lot of people push people into talk therapy, and I think it's very useful if it works for you. But find other ways. It's not right for everybody. For some people, it's never right. And for some folks, you have to do other things first before that feels like a safe or like the appropriate conduit. Right?

I started reading a lot like I was just literally like anything that I could get my hands on that felt like liberation or felt countercultural, I started just documentaries. Literally, anything I could get my hands on. So it was a combination of a relearning, but it also was coupled specifically with very, very intentional mentorship and "more traditional" healing modalities.

And it took a really long time. I will say I think that it was "easier" for me because I already, because of my education background, conceptually, I already understood these things. I had already been exposed to them. I knew the frameworks. I could teach the frameworks. I understood decolonization as again, theory. I had that down. But what I didn't have was a space or way or guidance in how to integrate the intellectual that I knew and understood with the embodiment and the actual practices.

And then the third piece, it's kind of like a trifecta, and then at the time which obviously, I went and acquired a third piece to then be able to process all of the emotions that came up and have a safe space to go and say like, "Hey, I did a really hard thing, or I practiced this boundary, or I showed up differently in a meeting." And it felt so good and so real and authentic. But now, everybody is mad, and I don't know why everyone was mad.

**Amanda Lytle:** Right.

**Louiza "Weeze" Doran:** I'm like, "I'm probably going to get fired. What's happening?" Right?

**Amanda Lytle:** Yeah.

**Louiza "Weeze" Doran:** Which is for a lot of people, the reason that you're like, "I'm just not going to say anything. I don't want to have to deal with that. Da da da." Right? But I had a space where I could go and navigate that and talk about that.

And then say like strategically what needs to happen. And for me, it was like, “I just need to start my own business because like that’s the only way I’m going to be able to live this as authentically as I want to.”

But yeah, it was – I mean it was a very difficult period in my life, but it was also the single most defining moment. And not the divorce, the choice that I made for myself to commit to my own personal sovereignty afterwards.

**Amanda Lytle:** Oh, I feel that. Yeah.

**Louiza “Weeze” Doran:** Yeah. That was the defining moment.

**Amanda Lytle:** I love that you’ve just named that, Weeze, because I think that that is the moment where it’s almost like you’re recommitting to yourself. It’s like I got you and I’ve got you forever.

**Louiza “Weeze” Doran:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Amanda Lytle:** Yeah.

**Louiza “Weeze” Doran:** And so we started talking in the beginning with this idea of like coming home to yourself, like that was the choice that I made. I was like I have never felt like home like in my own body. It has never felt like home. That was the first script outside of myself. I always second guess my intuition and my inner voice and all of those things. I denied the needs of my inner child. I want home to be with me wherever I am. I want to be my own – I want to be my own home. I want to be able to look inside and find safety and peace and quiet. I want that for me. I want that for everyone. That’s why now I like do this work, right? But that was – yeah, that was really, really important.

**Amanda Lytle:** Yeah. I could talk to you for so long about this stuff just because it resonates so deeply but just being respectful of your time, I really wanted I think that this is just a perfect nugget to end with here is the word no. I’ll let you take it from here because this is something that I still carry with me daily. But yeah, take it away.

**Louiza “Weeze” Doran:** Yeah. I literally put it on a shirt. So, no is a full sentence. No. No! No... No. Like you know what, use whatever punctuation – use no punctuation, whatever you want, right? It’s a concept that I literally had to learn to embrace and it was my kind of North Star in the beginning of my journey because for a lot of reasons and obviously not surprising, I was socialized female and like “high-functioning, high-performing,” all of those things so it’s like I was taught like you can be of service or rather, you’re supposed to be of service to everybody and everything outside of you while simultaneously trying to like pretend to be of service to yourself and if you can, like if it’s not literally killing you explicitly, like you’re supposed to say yes. You’re supposed to just always do those things or because of familial obligations or whatever.

And so then the first step in my journey was learning to be like, “OK, no. If I don’t want to do something, I’m not going to do it.” But it still came with like a paragraph long explanation.

**Amanda Lytle:** Yeah.

**Louiza “Weeze” Doran:** Through my journey, I’ve realized it’s also part of a trauma response, right? It’s like – and that’s again, we don’t have time to get into the mental, emotional aspects that exist there. But no, but I’m going to like justify this in all of the ways. Here’s my thesis. Right?

And then through my again, right next elevate or evolution rather of healing was just no, or I don’t want to. And it gets to be as simple as that. Now, that doesn’t mean that we don’t use our skillset and like we don’t have to like offer things to other people. So for example, there are some people that ask me for things that I am not in community with at all. Yeah, that’s going to be a no. Just period. Like, “No, thank you. No.” Because you are asking something from me. I don’t even know you. No. Right?

People I’m in community with, I might say, “No, I don’t have capacity right now.” Or “No, but I would love to circle back to this. Can you call me in a week and ask me again? So maybe I’ll feel differently.” Right?

Again, it’s not an explanation but it’s an invitation because if I’m in right reciprocal community with somebody, reciprocal relationship, I might want to extend that. But the fact that again, we’ve talked about personal sovereignty, the fact that I have a choice to give an empowered yes, an empowered no, an explanation, no explanation, an invitation, close the door, it can just be no.

That was profoundly life-changing for me. Like I said so much so that I put it on – according to Weeze Merch like blogs and shirts and journals because it was just so important like “Protecting your peace” and “No is a full sentence” were the two things that I was like always reorienting to. The questions that I ask myself are always, does this serve my peace? Does this enable me to protect my peace? And then do I want to do this? No. Do I want to do this now? No. Do I want to do it later? Maybe. Right? Being able to orient like does it feel good? Is this actually something I want?

**Amanda Lytle:** I love even as you just spoke that, you close your eyes for a second because it’s just that reminder to turn inwards.

**Louiza “Weeze” Doran:** Yeah.

**Amanda Lytle:** Like it’s OK to turn inwards. Check in with yourself first. Do you actually full body yes this or full body no this?

**Louiza “Weeze” Doran:** Yup.

**Amanda Lytle:** Ugh! OK. This has been so great. I have one last wrap-up. Are you ready?

**Louiza “Weeze” Doran:** Let’s do it.

**Amanda Lytle:** If you could a shout-out to an account, a person, an organization, disruptor, activist, or change agent, who would it be?

**Louiza “Weeze” Doran:** Oh my god! I can only name one?

**Amanda Lytle:** You can name a couple. Go for it.

**Louiza “Weeze” Doran:** That’s so hard. OK. Well, the first shout-out that I have to give is to my mentor, *Kwame [0:35:16] [Phonetic]*, he was a professor at Cal and an academic advisor, and he is a very large part, reason, that I am where I am today. He is a change agent and a disruptor and an amazing human in all of the ways and he is still here in the Bay Area. And he is not like a person that you can like go follow or anything. But any time I can, I shout him out.

And then other than that, I mean you all know Trudi and Maisha already, right? They are Row House authors. I would say Lettie, IG @sincerely.lettie. I would say Tareq Brown and his entire squad at America Hates Us, Fred Joseph, Terra Lyn Anderson as a gender equity educator. Oh my god! I could like really keep naming so many people.

Honestly, Bex. [Laughs] We can’t leave Bex out of that. Oh, Josh from Healing While Black. LaVon, she is an amazing author, and she just is completely disrupting the idea of like femininity and Christianity. Yeah, I could keep going but those are the people just like immediately off the top of my head.

**Amanda Lytle:** You just rattle those off like bam bam bam!

**Louiza “Weeze” Doran:** I know.

**Amanda Lytle:** No, I love it.

**Louiza “Weeze” Doran:** Oh, wait! One more! Shawn Ginwright who is actually who I got the term healing-centered from that LaVon put me on too. He is a professor I believe at East State here in the Bay Area and he really talks about the importance of instead of saying trauma-informed, flipping it and going to healing-centered and like what that does linguistically and the importance of that. He also just wrote a new book. He is amazing. And LaVon who I just told you all about like put me on to him. So OK, now, I’m done.

**Amanda Lytle:** You’re so great, Weeze. Thank you so much for your time, for your transparency, just for your authenticity. It means so much. And it has been an honor.

**Louiza “Weeze” Doran:** Thank you.

**Amanda Lytle:** Thank you.

**Louiza “Weeze” Doran:** I love doing this. I love being here.

**Amanda Lytle:** Thank you so much for being with us. Please be sure to check out [rowhousepublishing.com/podcast](http://rowhousepublishing.com/podcast) for full episode transcriptions and guest image descriptions and the show notes for all the links. Talk soon.

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