

TSF Tour LIVE: Jamie Kern Lima

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Intro: Hi friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. I'm really happy to be here with you today. We've got a great show in store. Throughout July you have been hearing and will continue to hear all of our That Sounds Fun tour LIVE conversations. So if you weren't able to make it in person, you'll still get to enjoy them. And we did save some of the interview just for the live audience but most of it is here, and you'll get to hear some live feedback from the friends who are with us that night.

At our Waco, Texas stop on the tour, we met up with my new friend Jamie Kern Lima. Jamie is a New York Times best-selling author and founder of IT Cosmetics, a company she started in her living room and grew to the largest luxury makeup brand in the country. She sold the company to L'Oréal in a billion-dollar deal. Y'all are going to laugh so hard when you hear the audience hear that for the first time. And then she became the first female CEO of the brand in its 100-plus year history.

Her new book is called "Believe IT: How to Go from Underestimated to Unstoppable." I think you're going to love the book and love this conversation. So here is Jamie Kern Lima live in Waco, Texas.

Annie F. Downs: Will you please welcome our guest, the founder of IT Cosmetics and the author of "Believe IT" Jamie Kern Lima.

Jamie Kern Lima: Yay. Hi guys!

Annie F. Downs: Yay! Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Oh.

Jamie Kern Lima: Thank you so much for having me. Hello, everyone. Hello. Hello. Hello.

Annie F. Downs: It just means the world that you're here. I am so grateful. You literally buzzed in from LA and you're buzzing back out just because you're kind to me.

Jamie Kern Lima: Oh, I love you. I'm honored to be here. Honored to be part of your show.

Annie F. Downs: Let's talk about IT Cosmetics. For any of our friends who are not wearing makeup, like the dudes, most of them, but anybody who doesn't know the story of IT Cosmetics, will you just kind of give the flyover of that?

Jamie Kern Lima: Yeah. IT Cosmetics... It's a wild story actually. Some people who know it may know maybe you've seen it in Sephora or on QVC. As we're speaking right now live, it's the largest luxury makeup company in the US, which is wild. Which is crazy.

Annie F. Downs: This woman created the largest luxury makeup company in the world.

Jamie Kern Lima: Well, it's crazy because... and the only reason I share that is it's really a God journey and it's a journey of struggle, of rejection, of setback, of... like if you ever know in your gut, you feel like something's part of your calling, but then it's just not going your way. That's really the journey.

I was a television news anchor and I thought I was in my dream job and I started getting hereditary rosacea. For me, it comes in the form of bright red, bumpy skin. And I would be anchoring the news live and I would hear in my earpiece from my producer, "There's something on your face. There's something on your face. You need to wipe it off." You know, I'd be live on TV. And I knew there was nothing I could wipe off. I knew that the makeup was breaking up, it wasn't working.

So I started this season in my life of what I thought was setback. I was struggling with a lot of self-doubt. I would be live anchoring the news thinking like, "Are viewers changing the channel? Am I going to lose my job?" All the things. I started trying to find products that would work, from the drugstore products to the department store to the pro makeup artists. I didn't know anything about that makeup, but I knew I couldn't find anything that worked.

So I had this kind of moment... so when I pray, I hear God through my intuition. And then I had this strong intuition, this gut feeling like, "If you could launch a company and figure out a product that works for you, it'll probably help a lot of other people." So I had that feeling in my gut. But then my head was like, "Oh, but you're unqualified and you've got no money and no connections."

Annie F. Downs: Every TV anchor makes a makeup company. That's the next thing. Yeah, no.

Jamie Kern Lima: So, for a long time, I was like, "Do I take this leap?" I think the moments in life where we learn to hear ourselves and to trust ourselves, those are the moments that change our lives. And it was kind of a big risk to start IT Cosmetics. On my honeymoon flight to South Africa with my husband, we wrote the business plan, got back, quit our jobs, poured every penny we had in savings into our first product.

And I thought, "Oh, if we create a really great product, it's just gonna sell." What I didn't know was the first three years of the company, we couldn't afford to pay ourselves but also, it was hundreds of nos. So I had this feeling, this dream that if we could get on QVC, I could prove the product works. I had this kind of... and in building IT Cosmetics, I should take a step back. It wasn't for me just about, oh, let me create a great product.

I had this realization, Annie that, you know, why can't I find a product that works? And then I realized, "Wait a minute, I've never seen a model in a beauty ad with rosacea showing. And then I was like, "Why haven't I." And then I realized, all growing up I've seen thousands of beauty commercials. I always loved them but they always had kind of photoshopped flawless skin. And even though I aspired to look that way, they always kind of made me feel like I wasn't enough.

So I had this vision when I created IT Cosmetics, well, what if we could put real women like every age, shape, size, skin tone, skin challenge, call them beautiful models, mean it, and try to shift the definition of beauty for every little girl out there who's about to start doubting herself, and every grown woman who does. So my mission was strong. But when we launched the company, I would go to Sephora or Ulta, or other department stores, or QVC, and they all said no. They said women won't buy makeup from images that look like that-

Annie F. Downs: Which is unbelievable, right? They're like, "No, they don't want to see women that look like them."

Jamie Kern Lima: Exactly. Because it's never been done that way. You would think that makes sense that women would want to buy makeup from someone that looks like them and maybe as their age or has their skin challenges like me or whatever. It had never really been done. And it was this uphill battle of three years of hundreds of nos and hundreds of rejections.

We got down to no money. We couldn't afford to hire anybody. I didn't know how we were going to stay alive. And there were so many times where I thought it was gonna be our big break and then it was another just really big painful rejection.

Even QVC, which right now we're the largest beauty brand in QVC's history, but for three years, it was also a no. And every time I would get someone on the phone or get a meeting, they would say you're not the right fit for us or for QVC. So it was this uphill battle. I just want to share that because I think sometimes we just see people's highlight reels online or we just see the outcome. We're like, "Oh, wow, there's IT Cosmetics in Sephora or whatever." But Sephora said no for six years.

Annie F. Downs: Six years?

Jamie Kern Lima: Yeah. So it's just like sometimes you have to trust your gut and trust your calling and trust... when God's telling you you're supposed to be doing this, you don't always see it the way you want to see it and it doesn't always unfold the way you want it to unfold.

Annie F. Downs: It never does. I mean, really. I just feel like it never looks the way we thought. In the book, you talk about the difference between a setback and a setup.

Jamie Kern Lima: Yes.

Annie F. Downs: Were you going to talk about that? Like there's so many of us that are maybe in that place of where we feel like this just has not worked out. This thing that I thought was gonna work out, I wanted to write a book, I wanted to start a company, I thought our bank account would be different by now, and it feels like a ton of setbacks.

Jamie Kern Lima: You know, I have started this new relationship. I don't think I've ever talked about this. I've started this new relationship with how I embrace rejection in my life in a way where I become more fearless about it because I believe setbacks are setups for our calling and for what we're meant to do.

A couple examples. Well, for one, just getting the rosacea, thinking I'm going to get fired from all the things when really that was just a step in my journey of where I was supposed to go next. But even along the way... you know, there's a famous saying: rejection is God's protection.

Annie F. Downs: All of us who've dated know that's true.

Jamie Kern Lima: Yes.

Annie F. Downs: We all know.

Jamie Kern Lima: Oh, my goodness, yes. Well, I think it's true in so many other areas. When we're going through a hard season or when things don't look how we want to look or they feel unfair, it's easy to doubt God, frankly, to doubt a lot of things, to be disappointed. But I believe those seasons are shaping us and giving us the strength and allowing us to build the muscle in both character and experience for ultimately what our purpose and our calling and how we're supposed to show up and serve in the world, whether it's for other people on their own journey or just in our own next steps.

When I look back even just on this last decade, literally every tough season I now see why it happened. One example, we were down to under \$1,000 in our company and personal combined bank account, which for our company meant we had a couple weeks left until we were done. And we had a big phone call from a potential investor. So we were a couple years into the business and potential investor at this big private equity company was interested in investing in us.

And I was like, "This is huge." Because they're super well-known for taking these tiny brands' pre-revenue and turning them to household names that we all buy in the grocery stores, and they make them these big companies. And I'm like, "Oh my gosh." If they invest in us, a) we're not going to go bankrupt and b) maybe they can use their leverage to get us in the stores that keep telling me no. I was really excited.

So we started the meeting process, where you show all your projections and your product pipeline, and you do all these formal meetings. We did meeting after meeting. It got to the final meeting and I thought, "This is going to be a yes." I was so excited. My husband and I flew out for the meeting.

And I'll never forget this moment. Honestly, it's one of the... I don't know, one of the most defining moments in my life because of the lesson I learned out of it. But we got to the final meeting, and I was like, "This is gonna be huge." So we were in person and the head guy was about three feet from me in person. And he says, "We just want to congratulate you on your product, we really believe in it, but it's a no. We're gonna pass on investing in IT Cosmetics." And I was like, "Okay." I had heard no so many times, and I was like, "Can you tell me why?" Because feedback is usually a gift.

Annie F. Downs: Usually. Usually, it's a gift.

Jamie Kern Lima: And I said, "Can you tell me why?" And he got really quiet, and he says, "Do you want me to be really honest with you?"

Annie F. Downs: Oh, gosh.

Jamie Kern Lima: And I was like, "Yes, please." He's like three feet from me, and my husband, Paul, was on the other side and he says, "I just don't think women will buy makeup from someone who looks like you with your body and your weight."

Annie F. Downs: Those are fighting words.

Jamie Kern Lima: Well, it's interesting when he said that to me. First of all, I remember his mouth saying the words.

Annie F. Downs: I remember my husband crossing over.

Jamie Kern Lima: No. And in the moment, there's a lot of things happening. It felt almost like a lifetime of body doubt and self-doubt kind of like my body. It's almost like I was staring my own fear straight in the eye. But when he said those words, "I just don't think women will buy makeup from someone who looks like you with your body and your weight," I got this feeling. Literally, I remember it like it was yesterday. I got this feeling that said he's wrong. I felt it. I had no proof, I had no money, I had no sales, success, but I had this feeling.

And listen, I went out to my car and cried my eyes out. I didn't hear from him for another six years. But in those six years, there are many times... because we've all had moments where somebody doubts us or doesn't believe in us, or looks us in the eye and tells us we're not enough. I had to literally intentionally turn down the volume on those words when they would enter my head again in some moment and I would tap in that feeling, that knowing which I believe comes from God from me and my journey.

I didn't have to tap into that feeling that said he's wrong. I think this is so important and hard to do, but when we're going after our goals and dreams to not take rejection personally. Meaning, this is the guy that in some ways was just as much impacted by the decades of the past beauty industry as I was. He's saying she doesn't think I'll make him money because of how...right? So it's like, oh, he's just as much impacted.

Annie F. Downs: But how do you not take that personally?

Jamie Kern Lima: I know. It's hard. It's hard, but I've learned to trust that and to trust that rejection is God's protection. And just to share, I don't want to jump too far ahead, but six years later...

Annie F. Downs: Go girl. Tell them.

Jamie Kern Lima: I am getting fired up. I haven't seen people in so long. I want to hug everyone right now. It's the best. It's the best. But six years later, L'Oréal ended up buying this company I started my living room for-

Annie F. Downs: For how much money?

Jamie Kern Lima: And it was a dream to partner with them.

Annie F. Downs: How much money? Give the people the number.

Jamie Kern Lima: They said no for three years in meetings. So they bought IT Cosmetics for \$1.2 billion.

Annie F. Downs: Billion.

Jamie Kern Lima: Cash.

Annie F. Downs: Cash.

Jamie Kern Lima: Cash.

Annie F. Downs: Six years later, \$1.2 billion cash. I have never sat with a billionaire on purpose. I may have done it on accident.

Jamie Kern Lima: The cool part is they made me their first woman to hold a CEO title in their 100 plus year history, which is cool.

Annie F. Downs: Please tell me that guy had to come back into your life somehow—that guy who rejected you.

Jamie Kern Lima: Yes. Yes. L'Oréal is a public company. I didn't know until the day before that the purchase price was going to be disclosed.

Annie F. Downs: Oh, so you're like, "All my friends are about to know."

Jamie Kern Lima: I know, right? I know. Like my friends and family saw me on QVC at that point 250 times a year, but they didn't know if our company... no one really knew.

Annie F. Downs: No one talks about billions.

Jamie Kern Lima: No. No. So the day that it happened, the day the deal was announced, L'Oréal shared the purchase price. So it was everywhere. It was on the homepage of The Wall Street Journal. It was everywhere. And I heard from that guy. I heard from him for the first time in six years. And he's like, "Congratulations, I'm so happy for you. I was wrong." And I learned it would have been the most successful investment in his company's history had he believed in me.

But here's the thing. Here's the thing. Rejection is God's protection. Had he believed in me back then when that was all I wanted, I was so desperate at the time, we probably would have given him the majority of the company for almost no money. And because he didn't believe in me, by the time L'Oréal acquired our company, we were still the largest shareholders. So it was like rejection is God's protection in so many areas.

Annie F. Downs: I love that story. I love that number. That is a good number.

Sponsor: Hey, friends. Just interrupting our conversation to tell you about one of my favorite partners, Liquid IV. During these hot summer months, a few things that are essential in my daily routines are my quiet time and exercising. They truly jumpstart my day and clear my head and give me the energy I need to tackle my to-do list.

Along with those things, I always make sure to be proactive in giving my body the fuel and hydration it needs. Making hydration a priority helps us feel healthier on a day-to-day basis and fuels us to reach our highest potential. One stick of Liquid IV and water hydrates faster and more efficiently than water alone.

Not only that, but the product tastes great with flavors like watermelon, strawberry and lemon lime. Sounds like summer, doesn't it? I made sure to bring plenty of Liquid IV on the tour with me and even kept the office stocked and my whole team is hooked. I can trust we're all getting the hydration and fuel our body needs for the workday. Most of my friends know I kind of can't stop talking about Liquid IV.

One of the many things I love about the company is that they are on a mission to give back and have already donated over 11 million sticks to people around the world. Products are being donated to hospitals, first responders, food banks, veterans and active military.

In fact, one of our staff's husband is a firefighter and they received a care package of hydration packets to their station because nothing's more important than keeping our first responders hydrated on the job. Our whole team has tried every hydration flavor but some of our favorites are the passion fruit, the watermelon, strawberry. But there are so many to choose from. Y'all have to just let us know which one are your favorites.

Liquid IV hydrates faster and more efficiently than water alone. It contains five essential vitamins, more vitamin C than in orange, and as much potassium as a banana. They're healthier than sugary sports drinks, no artificial flavors or preservatives, and less sugar than in apple. You can trust they're made with clean ingredients, are non-GMO, vegan, and free of gluten, dairy, and soy.

So make sure you grab your Liquid IV in bulk nationwide at Costco or you can get 25% off when you go to Liquidiv.com and use the code THATSOUNDSFUN at checkout. That's 25% off anything you order and you get better hydration today using the promo code THATSOUNDSFUN at liquidiv.com.

And now back to our conversation with Jamie.

Annie F. Downs: When you think about that, I mean, tell me what you know about God today, that you didn't know the day before you got that call from L'Oréal. Because people learn a lot from God when things go down. What did you learn about God when this happened?

Jamie Kern Lima: What did I learn that's different? Well, for me, my God journey has been a lifelong one. When I wrote "Believe It," I decided to share it for the first time because I think, you know, for one, in corporate America, in a lot of parts of our country, in a lot of markets, you're encouraged not to share your faith. And when I was meeting with publishers even, there were some that didn't want me to share that part of me.

And I wrote a whole book about how do you overcome self-doubt and step into who you authentically are. So how could I do this and not be authentic? It's fascinating the relationship that faith has right now in a lot of areas of our society. But I really wanted to share the real journey.

I was raised going to church every Sunday in a Lutheran Church, and I never connected with... I would sit in the pews and just scan the pews for cute boys and count down the minutes until the sermon ended. I always prayed and I always thought I believed in God, and then I went through a season in my life where I lived in New York City for a while, I started meeting a lot of people of

different faiths, and no faith and a lot of people that only believe in science and only believe in what you can see and feel and touch and prove for which faith isn't required.

I went through maybe a decade-long journey of what I call "God doubt". And I started to doubt. I would pray and I might be praying for a friend's health, but I actually wasn't sure. I actually doubted it. I never told anyone this. My parents would be mortified if I said, "Oh, I'm doubting God exists." And I went through a really tough season.

There was a journey in my life where I found out in my late 20s I was adopted by surprise and I went through this-

Annie F. Downs: It's all in the book. Y'all got to read it. She literally accidentally found out she was adopted.

Jamie Kern Lima: Yeah. And that started a whole season of calling thousands of women trying to find my birth mom. When you're getting hung up on thousands of times for years... I went through a season. I was raised in a family that never went to therapy or counseling for help or anything, and I realized I need to do that. I saw a therapist for the first time in my life on my own and it was such a blessing.

One day I was sharing with her, you know, I'm between being adopted and all these things, I don't know where I come from, I'm not even sure God exists. And she said to me something that changed my life and started my whole faith journey. She said, "Well, what makes you think God can't handle your doubt?" And I'm like, "What do you mean?" She's like, "Well, if He created the whole universe, what makes you think He can't handle your doubt?" She says, "Try telling Him you're doubting Him and ask Him to prove you wrong beyond a shadow of a doubt and see what happens." And I was like, "Okay."

Annie F. Downs: "Will do."

Jamie Kern Lima: "Will do." So this is embarrassing to say, but we're a family at this point. So for several years... It didn't happen instantly. But every time I would pray, like if I was praying for a friend's health, I would literally in my head, you know, to myself but to God, I guess, I would silently say at the end of the prayer, "And by the way, God I'm doubting you exist. So if you could please show up and prove me wrong beyond a shadow of a doubt, I'd be so grateful. In Jesus name. Amen." That was-

Annie F. Downs: That's so honest. That is beautiful.

Jamie Kern Lima: And I did that for years. When I wrote this book, I prayed, "God use me." You know I'm donating 100% of the proceeds. All that kind of stuff. I love when you talked about... what did you say sneaky Jesus was earlier?

Annie F. Downs: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Your sneaky Jesus, for sure.

Jamie Kern Lima: In the book. But I wanted to share the real story because I know there's a lot of people out there that maybe feel like they're not qualified to pray or they've made too many mistakes or they're not this and that for that enough for God to love them. And I talk about my own journey of navigating all that. And there are more times than I can count where God has proved beyond a shadow of a doubt to me that He exists and literally all but screamed it from the rooftops. In some cases that happened.

There's stories of people that said no for years that called up and said, "I don't know why I'm calling but God told me to call you..." You know what I mean?

Annie F. Downs: Yes.

Jamie Kern Lima: "...and I want to give you a chance." They're just story after story when I started asking Him to show up.

Annie F. Downs: I think that's what y'all are gonna love if you haven't read "Believe It" yet is that as I was reading through, I'm going, "Oh, these are amazing stories." And then you get to the last two chapters and then Jamie sneaky Jesus's you. And she goes like, "You know that story you read back there? Here's what that person heard from God that got them involved." I mean, it ties everybody together. I was reading it today at Common Grounds. I was reading it out loud across the table. I was like, "No no no. Listen to this." I mean, I was like an insane person.

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Annie F. Downs: One of the things I love in the book as well is where you talk about having balance. And I think we're just gonna go there about this. Because in the book I thought you were going to talk about like mom guilt kind of balance. And like the balance isn't even really possible. We're not ever going to live a fully balanced life. How do we figure out where to put our energy?

In fact, one of the people in the book is telling you a story and saying, "Well, I had to have someone come to help clean my house because I needed to put my energy toward raising my kids and doing this and doing that." But one of the points you make in the book—and I think this connects with men and women, young and old—is that the energy we put toward being unkind to ourselves in our bodies is keeping us from putting good energy towards something else. Will you talk about that and teach us how to redirect our energy?

Jamie Kern Lima: I had so many epiphanies. In the book, I talk about self-doubt, body-doubt, God-doubt, all doubt-

Annie F. Downs: Yeah, all the doubts.

Jamie Kern Lima: ...and how to overcome it. The journey I think so many of us are on is just a lifelong journey of continually learning how to overcome self-doubt and step into the person we're born to be. One of the big epiphanies that I had when I created IT Cosmetics is like, so I'm not a person... And there are people that love to spend hours doing artistic makeup. I'm not. I love-

Annie F. Downs: I love watching those YouTube videos though.

Jamie Kern Lima: They're beautiful. And I feel like if it brings you joy, and it's fun, great. But I'm someone that's like, no, I like under five minutes. That's it. You know what I mean? That's it. Everyone's different. There's a famous quote that the price you pay for... now I'm gonna forget it and it's in my book. Oh, my gosh.

Annie F. Downs: Show me where.

Jamie Kern Lima: I don't know what page. But it's like the price you pay for something is what you could have been doing in its place. The time you spend on anything, the energy you spend on anything comes at the price of what that energy could be going to. So every choice you make comes at the expense of what that time and energy could have been going to.

And I had this epiphany, where I realized the number of hours, endless hours of moments I spent on thinking about things like, what size I was, what I fit into, not wanting to go to an event because nothing fit. The more I thought about it, I realized, well, wait a minute, there's probably so many young girls and women watching Annie Downs build an empire and be vulnerable and be honest, and they're so inspired and believe they can do it themselves because they see you doing it.

And I had this moment where I realized, wait a minute, I'm dimming my own light. I'm calling it humble. I'm dimming my own light. I'm not wanting to be in any of this stuff. But what if there's other girls and women out there that if they read my story of being a Denny's waitress and pushing grocery carts in the Safeway parking lot and starting this idea in my living room, what if they read that and then they see me on the Forbes list, and they believe they can be on the Forbes list, right?

Annie F. Downs: Yeah. Yeah

Jamie Kern Lima: And I had this epiphany. So now I let them print whatever they want. I still don't give them information, but I'm like, "Okay."

Annie F. Downs: "Call me as rich as you want."

Jamie Kern Lima: I know. It's just a weird topic because you just feel like you... But I just realized, "You know what? If we don't ever start to realize when we're dimming our own light..."

Annie F. Downs: Gosh, yes.

Jamie Kern Lima: And as women, so many of us, if you really think about it, and I talk about this in "Believe It" as well, just my journey of realizing this, that we often bond over problems. When you think about groups of women... And we all at our core want to belong and want to fit in and want to be loved. When you think about peer groups of women that go to coffee, most of the time it feels just like, "Oh, I'm gaining weight. This happened. My house is a mess, dah, dah, dah." We don't take compliments, and we are self-deprecating, and we all fit in.

But if someone comes in that group and is like, you know, "This happened. I just pulled right up and didn't have to put money in the meter, and I got the parking spot. I've been eating whatever I want. I just can't..." all the things, they risk exclusion. Do you see what I mean?

Annie F. Downs: Yes.

Jamie Kern Lima: But that shouldn't be the case. So I feel like that one-

Annie F. Downs: That's interesting.

Jamie Kern Lima: Right? I feel like one step at a time, as women, when we learn to shine our light, and even if not everyone gets it, and even if five haters online pop up, we just got to endure it because I think it's important we start flipping that narrative. And most men are like, "Yeah, I bench 220, "or whatever it is, they celebrate. And we're like, "Oh, I'm a hot mess." Do you know what I mean?

Annie F. Downs: Right.

Jamie Kern Lima: And I think one step at a time, just that awareness of wait, am I dimming my own light and calling it being humble? And am I doing it to fit in?

Annie F. Downs: That's what you say: Not fitting in can be a superpower.

Jamie Kern Lima: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Annie F. Downs: I love that.

Jamie Kern Lima: Well, in the journey with L'Oréal, it was three years, by the way and they have 40 beautiful luxurious brands. I would go to their offices, and they were all in couture and all this stuff. And I was like, "Oh." And for a long time, I felt like I didn't fit in. Even when they would give me advice on things to change the brand because I had this vision of partnering with them, but the meetings would always end in a no.

But the one thing I will say is, in that journey of building IT Cosmetics, I continued to stay true to the original mission even when people said to change it—the original mission of using every type of real person as a model.

Annie F. Downs: That's what we've all loved about it all along. I mean, that's what my friends and I talk about with your line is all those girls look so different and they all look like someone I know. And you just never gave that up even when the pressure was so high to change your life. I mean, that's dimming your light too.

Jamie Kern Lima: Yeah, exactly. And also when we finally did start getting in stores, they'd want us to create a product that was on-trend or that was a beautiful artistry product and I'm like, "That's not our mission. That's not aligned with who we are." We always stuck to that. And so we

didn't just launch random crap because it was gonna make money short term, which a lot of brands are forced to do. Sorry to say that in a church, but we stuck really-

Annie F. Downs: Harris Creek I think will survive us. I think they'll survive us.

Jamie Kern Lima: We stuck really true to... there's a famous quote. I think it's Dr. Seuss who says you have to be odd to be number one. When sometimes we feel quirky or who we are doesn't fit in, I believe that's our superpower. After three years of them saying no, when L'Oreal acquired our brand, it was because we stuck to that, we stuck to that being odd, being authentically who we were. And they own 40 other companies but we weren't like any one of them.

And so we had created something that was so valuable, that didn't compete with any of their other brands that made it worth so much money for them. I think sometimes we can walk in rooms and feel like, "Oh, wait, should I change who I am? Should I show up as my representative?" And it's like, no. It's like to ever find fun and joy, and fulfillment, but also to step into all of who you are, it's like really learning to just embrace who you are fully and stick to it.

Annie F. Downs: One of the reasons I really wanted you to be one of these live shows is I think when you explain things like that, you're actually telling a real gospel message of do not change the gospel even if it's different. Do not water this thing down because what people actually love about Jesus is who He really is. And so you're doing a sneaky Jesus thing on everybody by saying like... I know we're talking about makeup, but what I'm actually talking about is who are you? And are you willing to be fully you in a room? Jamie and I both were talking earlier that we feel like we look like siblings a little bit.

Jamie Kern Lima: Don't we kind of?

Annie F. Downs: There's a lot of similarities in our faces and bank accounts. I am a thousand-aire and it gets me where I need to go. But I think one of the things is the world doesn't need me to be Jamie, and the world doesn't no need Jamie to be Annie. What is actually our gospel call is go hard after being you and light up a room. Light of a room. And if you don't show up because the jeans didn't fit, the world misses out on you. And that's ridiculous. Put on soft pants. Come on anyway.

Jamie Kern Lima: And this message, oh, gosh, this is so important. I hope and pray every person listening to us that this takes root. Because in a social media world where we're seeing so many people's highlight reels, and our human brain goes right to comparison syndrome and right

to thoughts. Like we post something and then only one person liked it, and like, "Wait a minute..." And we get tempted to show up as someone else or show up as our representative.

Annie F. Downs: Show up as our representative. Yeah.

Jamie Kern Lima: And here's the thing is, all the research shows that the only way you can ever have a true connection with another human being is if you show up fully authentically. Like all the parts, good parts, messy parts, quirky parts. That's the only way you can have a real connection in a relationship with friends or family or a relationship with your customers. Or a relationship with your community online or relationship with the readers of your book.

I learned this play out before my eyes. After we eventually got on QVC, which is a crazy story and one of the biggest risks I've ever taken in my career, that one shot we got on QVC not knowing if we'd ever come back, but when we eventually did, I ended up doing over a thousand live shows myself and it was a wild, blessed journey.

Annie F. Downs: And were y'all living in LA and you were flying to Pittsburgh all the time?

Jamie Kern Lima: We moved.

Annie F. Downs: Okay.

Jamie Kern Lima: Yeah, we moved. We were in Jersey City, but I was basically living in Pennsylvania in the QVC green room and then the Sheraton Hotel, the only hotel right there nearby. I was doing 250 live shows a year myself.

Annie F. Downs: Oh, my gosh.

Jamie Kern Lima: But at any moment, if one show doesn't go well, you can lose a product. It was a wild season. I was completely burnt out in doing 100 hour weeks and made a lot of mistakes in that journey. But one of the cool parts was that you see tens of thousands of entrepreneurs come through the door. So like all the companies you guys know in every store, whether it's like Apple iPhone or Vitamix or Dyson, every brand out there, at some point they try to sell their products on QVC.

So over the course of eight years, I got to meet tens of thousands of entrepreneurs in the green room, because you're there for hours. If you're on air for eight minutes, you're there for a minimum of four hours in the green room, because you do the before shots and the producer meetings. It's a wild place. You can sell more on QVC in one hour than a whole year in

department stores because they're live to 100 million homes. And QVC changed our life, they changed our company, everything.

But what I was going to say that was one of the biggest lessons I learned around authenticity was, over the course of the eight years and meeting tens of thousands of entrepreneurs, very few ever made it. Like 99%. Even the big brands we love, their CEO, or founder, or their most seasoned salesperson would go on air in QVC. And they would only last one show, they wouldn't hit the sales numbers. Some lasted two shows. Most of them don't make it because you have to hit a certain sales...

So over the years, I eventually started thinking about, like, what is that commonality of the brands that make it that last that build a big customer following and keep hitting their sales goals? What is that? Is there something they have in common?

And here's the thing that I realized. It wasn't the ones that necessarily have the best product. All though some of them really have amazing products. It wasn't the ones that were the most well-funded or the person that went on air that was the best salesperson or the funniest or any of those things.

The only thing that I could ever, ever see that they've all had in common, the brands that made it were the ones where the person that went on air live to 100 million homes was the same off air in the green room when no one's watching, and we're all sitting around eating doughnuts and talking, the same there as they were on air, for better or worse.

Some are way out there, some are real introverted, real quiet. But the ones that showed up who they authentically were... And I started realizing this is really fascinating because you can't fake authenticity. Customers are smart and people are smart. Like we know when we're at coffee on a date and we're like, "Mmm." Or we're with friends and we feel like somebody is not-

Annie F. Downs: One of the girls at the table ain't telling the truth.

Jamie Kern Lima: Yeah. We feel it, right? And so customers feel it too, communities online feel it.

Annie F. Downs: Churches feel it.

Jamie Kern Lima: Churches feel it. Yes, you feel it.

Annie F. Downs: You feel it.

Jamie Kern Lima: And I think that this lesson, and me seeing it play out right before my eyes on, oh, wow, the ones that made it out of tens of thousands of entrepreneurs, the ones that are the same... I think as human beings, especially in this digital world, especially as we are so easy to compare ourselves to everyone else's highlight reel, when we learn that lesson of, oh, my gosh, if I just shed that representative costume and just show up as me, that's your superpower. That's your superpower. And to see that in the business world before my eyes was huge. And when we all learn that lesson personally, it's freeing. It's freeing.

Annie F. Downs: Oh, my gosh. So powerful. What seems to be true is what works in one mountain of culture works in every mountain of culture.

Jamie Kern Lima: Yeah.

Annie F. Downs: Man, that is...Uuuuh, you got me fired up, girl. You're lucky that I'm still sitting. I can jump up and talk about it, and preach about it. But I'm not gonna do it. Jamie, we are already out of time, which I can't believe. You're incredible.

Jamie Kern Lima: You're incredible.

Annie F. Downs: I'm just so thankful. Is there anything we didn't cover you want to make sure we say?

Jamie Kern Lima: Oh, my gosh, just that you're just as amazing behind the scenes as on stage.

Annie F. Downs: That's very kind. That is very kind. Thank you. I've told you this in person and in a letter and in all the ways that I am so inspired by you. Not just the sale, though yes. I am actually so inspired because I love seeing strong women build empires and build things that affect the kingdom of God and affect people for the kingdom of God and have healthy friendships and families. And you do. So I think so highly of you.

Another one of our mutual friends at your book launch said, "Jamie always shows up for people. Of course, everyone showed up for her today." And today, her whole plan of being in this town with us got canceled and she came anyway and is going right back. And I said, "I can't believe you did that." And she said, "Well, I show up for my friends." Right? Yes, I know.

I hope this is not your last time on That Sounds Fun. That would be my dream that this is just the beginning of us getting to do this. The last question we always ask is, because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you.

Jamie Kern Lima: Oh, my goodness. What sounds fun to me is dancing with you as we close the show.

Annie F. Downs: Okay, yeah, yeah.

Jamie Kern Lima: And everyone else dancing with us.

Annie F. Downs: Oh, we'll be doing that.

Jamie Kern Lima: That sounds so fun.

Annie F. Downs: Yeah, yeah, that was fun. Are y'all ready back there for music? We're gonna have to do some good tunes. Yeah, we'll do that.

Jamie Kern Lima: I'm trying to dance more and I'm trying to have more fun. I am so inspired, and I think your message is so important. You know, we have another mutual friend Bob Goff. When I first met Bob, I had to be so honest with him. I'm like, "I don't think that I've been having fun for a long time." Because I was working so hard, and I went through the season where when we finally started getting success, I almost couldn't believe it.

And then I just was, "Oh, I'm going to strike while the iron is hot," and I became addicted to work. It was 10 years of 100 hour weeks. And after I met him for the first time, he sent me a Mickey... He wears a Mickey Mouse watch every day. He sent me a Mickey Mouse watch in the mail. And he's like, "Here's to having more fun." So now my husband got me this Mickey Mouse watch. I literally have to wear reminders to have fun, which sounds, you know... maybe it doesn't sound crazy to a lot of people.

Annie F. Downs: It doesn't sound crazy. We have to remember to eat healthy. We have to remember to take care of our bodies. We have to remember to take care of our spirits. We have to remember to have fun. It's part of the deal.

Jamie Kern Lima: Have fun, yes, yes.

Annie F. Downs: You are doing it just right. Friends, will you please thank Jamie Kern Lima for joining us.

Jamie Kern Lima: Yah.

Annie F. Downs: Amazing! Amazing!

Outro: Oh, friends, isn't she the best? Y'all, did you love hearing how the audience fell in love with her as the show kept going? Oh, I loved it. You probably feel the same. Me too. I adore her. We're gonna be friends forever. Be sure to grab a copy of her book "Believe It." And y'all, she's donating 100% of her author proceeds for "Believe It" to Feeding America and Together Rising. How amazing is that? Please give Jamie Kern Lima a follow if you're not already and tell her thanks so much for being on the show.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook. All the places you may need me, that's how you can find me. I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home and do something that sounds fun to you. I will do the same. Have a great week. We'll see you back here on Wednesday as our live shows continue with Knox and Jamie from the podcast.