

Tiffany : [00:04](#) Hi, welcome to the One Love Fits All online conference benefiting Embody love movement. My name is Dr Tiffany Denny and I am the executive director of Embody Love Movement. Today my guest is Kelly Diels. Kelly is a feminist marketing consultant. She is a writer soon to be author. She is a mother and she is a really creative thinker. She has done a lot of work in helping people, um, approach marketing, approach media and social media through the lens of justice. So there's this huge awareness building component and then there's actually an action component to this. And Kelly and I talk about that in our conversation as well as what is feminist marketing, what differentiates it? Why is it important? We talk about the term she coined the female lifestyle empowerment brand and why we need to understand what that is. And we talk about what it means to be a culture maker, which we all are. I really love this conversation. I wished it could have been three times as long and I hope you enjoy it as well.

Pura Fe Sings: [01:19](#) (singing) True freedom involves the understanding of our true human spirit within. It dispels the lie of inadequacy and helplessness who are we? Powerful beyond measure. Who are we? Power of the creator....

Tiffany : [01:47](#) Hi Kelly. Welcome. Thank you so much for being here.

Kelly : [01:51](#) Thank you for inviting me, Tiffany.

Tiffany : [01:53](#) I am so excited to talk to you. I found you, I think I was, you know, Googling things about media literacy and like trying to find new sources and new resources on media literacy because we do a lot of education on media literacy in our programming. And I came across you and I came across a podcast. I actually think the first podcast I heard that you spoke on was the Food Psych podcast and which, yeah, it was, came out a few months ago. And I listened that, that one like three or four times because it was like, Oh, there's so much here. Had to listen to it a few times. And then, um, and so then I've been like on your newsletter and all of that really wonderful stuff. And so I'm excited to bring your wisdom to this conference because I feel like you offer something in the concept of media literacy and how we engage with media that is like really a necessary and really important. And so you have sort of identified this niche, this niche, I don't know how you say it, of feminist marketing consultant and so I want to know like what makes that, how did you come up with that distinction? Why is it necessary? Why did it present itself?

Kelly :

[03:21](#)

Oh my gosh, we're like casting back to being 11 years old and discovering Ms magazine and really let me take you through a brief chronology in the last 30 years. I love that. No, I mean, in all seriousness, I did discover Ms magazine when I was 11 years old and spent an entire summer at the library. I literally took out every single Ms magazine in the library and had so many overdue late fines because I wanted to keep them all that I actually had to write like a little forgiveness, please, give me amnesty. They accepted it. I've never paid my fines. So anyways, Ms. Magazines and it like gave me answers to so much what at 11 I had already like felt like there was all these messages in our culture that didn't jive with my actual reality. And there were things that were happening in my reality that I had no language for that Ms magazine gave me a language for.

Kelly :

[04:20](#)

So that was sort of my feminist awakening at the age of 11. So since then I have always lived and done my work through a feminist lens. Now I didn't take Women's Studies at university, I actually took Political Science, but I wrote every single paper through the lens of feminism. It's my moral center. And when I say feminism, what I'm really talking about is justice. And it's about dismantling inequity in all its forms. So dismantling white supremacy, ableism, heteronormativity, like everything that oppresses us and makes us play small, I want to get rid of it all. So that's where I'm coming from. So now as a marketing consultant, this presents a bit of a challenge. So if my personal moral code is justice and non-oppression and creating opportunities for everyone to flourish, and I'm a marketing consultant and marketers use a lot of nefarious tactics to manipulate people into doing things that might not be in their best interests, like now I have a bit of cognitive dissonance, shall we say. So how do I, how do I, how do I fix that? So one is I can go live in a yurt and go off grid and not participate in a sexist, racist society anymore. And I kind of nixed that idea. I remain like in our system and find, figure out how to change it. So what I decided to do was to start doing all of my work again through that lens of justice and explicitly deconstruct the marketing systems, figure out every tactic, figure out what its outcome is on people, how it may or may not be oppressive. And if I can figure that out, then I can get rid of a whole bunch of tactics, which now leaves a void. What do I fill them with? And so that's been my work over the last, let's say four or five years, is how do I put together marketing systems and copywriting formulas that work, that help the feminist entrepreneurs and the culture makers and the world makers flourish, have flourishing businesses and take up space and cultivate influence in our society.

- Kelly : [06:26](#) We need to be visible. So we need PR, we need marketing. Like I want us to be successful and not have to, you know, live under rocks, right? So I want us to be successful. So we need marketing systems, but we can't use the existing ones because the existing ones are abusive and oppressive. So that's why I say I'm a feminist marketing consultant. I'm specifically going to recommend marketing systems and tactics that don't oppress or abuse your clients because presumably you care about them
- Tiffany : [06:54](#) Presumably. Yeah. And, and actually in all honesty, I think that so many people, and I say you know, companies, but like, but people, even people that are individual businesses, you know, that are entrepreneurs that are their own brand, you know, we, there is like this sense of, of care and wanting to care about their consumer. And yet there is that dissonance. And so what does that, what does that dissonance look like? Like how can you identify when it is present?
- Kelly : [07:27](#) Okay, so like I'm just gonna give you a super tiny example. So let's say someone teaches you how to launch something online and they say, you know what? You have to use scarcity. You have to make people feel like this thing is limited and not available so that they stop thinking and their instincts take over. Because our human instincts, when we sense famine or scarcity is to gather all the resources so that we will survive. And that doesn't mean, and it happens subconsciously. So marketers will and marketing leaders will teach other entrepreneurs to signal scarcity so that people stop thinking and gather the resources, meaning make the sale without thinking. So on a, what does that look like, like out in the wild? That looks like a countdown clock saying you've got five minutes, four minutes, three minutes, you know like pressuring you to buy the thing before it disappears.
- Kelly : [08:19](#) It looks like saying there's only 16 available when it's a PDF that is endlessly reproducible. It's limiting a time when you can buy it. You can only buy it during the month of September. But again, it's like a video you could download any time. It should be available anytime. So it's putting fake scarcity into things so that people start behaving instinctually and often in very high risk situations where the thing is \$10,000 \$19,000 has a 20% payment plan. Like things that can alter your financial future. So that's what I mean, it's like looking at the actual tactics, figuring out what they look like and then what do we do instead? So how do people still make the sales they need to thrive without exploiting people and making, triggering, them into subconscious decisions that might actually be bad for them.

Tiffany : [09:10](#) Yeah. Because I can imagine that would be, you know, if those tactics are the information that's out there, you know, you'd go and you'd take like a marketing course and that's what you learn, right? Of course. That's what you're going to use. Right. And I think too, there's, it's so funny that the, that the example was scarcity because, and then there's also like the idea of the feeling of scarcity on the side of the person doing the marketing too, right. Like, Oh, there's not enough market share for me. I have to compete. I have to do this. I have to do that, in order to, to just compete.

Kelly : [09:44](#) Well, the thing is these tactics are the norm, which is why I want to raise awareness about what these tactics are. Because as soon as you know someone's using a tactical on you, it doesn't work because it raises up to the level of consciousness. So if someone says to you I'm going to lure you in with such and such, of course it's not going to work because they've given away the game. Right? You see it. And so it's the same thing as if you know what the triggers are and you can spot them, then they no longer work on you. They only work on a subconscious level. So that's why I'm sort of trying to raise awareness about them so that we can spot them, avoid them. And then for those of us who are entrepreneurs and marketers and people who are building profiles for nonprofits and you know, advocating for political change, how do we influence behavior? How do we help people take action without leveraging those subconscious triggers?

Tiffany : [10:38](#) Yeah. Great. That's like a a great question and I'm so glad that you're doing that work out there because I think, I think there'll be a lot of people that are like, how do you do that? You know? Yes, exactly.

Kelly : [10:50](#) Well, I mean I actually have an answer if you want to, if we want to skip right there. So one of the ways we do it research confirming like research about political communications that confirms that this works is instead of, for example, starting with a problem and, so one of the conventional marketing tactics is start with a problem and really agitate that problem and make the person feel shame about that problem and feel embarrassed and like that they need to solve this thing that's making them feel awful. Again, this all happening on a subconscious level. So there's actual research that says instead of starting with a problem and putting your person in shame, you can start with a shared value and a thing that you're mutually inspired by and then you can talk about the problem. But if you start with the shared value, you put people in a place of power so they can make a deliberate decision and then they

are in fact more likely to make a deliberate decision rather than being shamed into a subconscious one.

Kelly :

[11:44](#)

So what that might look like is starting with something like, we all believe that every child should go to bed with a full belly. We all believe that every child should have enough to eat, right? We started with a shared value and then we say something specific like what? So and so wants to take away food stamps. Now we started the problem and the problem is not the client, right? The problem is an actual villain who's trying to do something nefarious and then you say, okay, so this is what we can do together. And then the person takes the action to call their Senator to make a donation, whatever, whatever it is. So we can apply that in sales as well. We can start with a shared value. Like we all want women to be the fullest, most competent, empowered beings they can be. But unfortunately our culture gets in the way of that. Here's a program that can help you build your confidence skills. Here's how you can take action. Great. So we can do the start with shared values and help people make deliberate decisions instead of shaming them and like agitating them and making them feel like nothing so that they buy to get out of that feeling.

Tiffany :

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I love that. I feel like that's so important, especially in organizations or for entrepreneurs or for businesses that purport to be all about like empowerment, especially, you know, empowering women, empowering people. If we're, if that's like our angle and we talk about that as something that is a value. Um, and I think that going about it in that way is super important,

Kelly :

[13:25](#)

right? It has to be aligned with the work that we're trying to do. So something, I mean, I work with two main groups. I work with culture making organizations and feminist entrepreneurs. And so many of my feminist entrepreneurs are coaches or therapists or healers of some sort. And so they literally, their work literally in the world is to help women make deliberate decisions and powerful decisions about their lives. And then if we use these subconscious triggers to get them into a program to help them make deliberate decisions, we're literally undermining our own work, right? So we have to actually choose marketing tactics that help us create the outcomes that we're desiring to make. The other kinds of organizations I work with are culture making, usually feminist organizations doing significant social programs in the world. And I sat in, I was invited to sit in on a brainstorm for an organization that works with at risk youth and girls. At risk for sexual predation for trafficking, etc.

- Kelly : [14:25](#) And there's a whole bunch of really brilliant marketing women in the room and figuring out how to help this organization like rise and take up more space and get more resources. And one of the women was like, okay, so let's use the social trigger of reciprocity. Let's send everyone a small gift in the mail and then they will feel obliged to send in a donation. And I was sitting there thinking, but that's literally grooming, that is literally rape culture, which is what we're trying to end, which is, you know, someone love bombs you into doing something for them, that they want you to do and you feel obliged to reciprocate. So we just literally can't use tactics that reproduce the very culture we're trying to get rid of.
- Tiffany : [15:08](#) Yes. And it's hard to spot sometimes too because it's so deeply held in there.
- Kelly : [15:15](#) Yes it is. This is, this is why it's important to me to do feminist marketing, to do marketing through a feminist lens because I want to attend to those outcomes and how they produce or don't produce a particular kind of culture and our marketing...so here's what I say all the time. We now know that most of the systems and the structures in our world, were not set up to help girls and women and marginalized people thrive. Instead, they were set up to exploit us and prey on us. And that is also true of marketing and advertising systems. So we know from the get go that they were designed to exploit us, which means we actually have to make new ones. That's why I try to do feminist marketing.
- Tiffany : [16:02](#) Yeah. We actually have to make new ones, and that can feel, it can almost feel really overwhelming just like with all systems change, right? Like something that goes against the grain so intensely yet. Um, it sounds like you've been having really good success with doing that, with actually creating change and then helping people use it effectively.
- Kelly : [16:27](#) Well, I find that people are actually hungry to do this. Nobody, well, very few people grow up wanting to be exploitative or oppressive, right? So if they have a choice and someone can present them with some tools and there is actually a way forward, sincere, committed culture makers will adopt those techniques. So it's just on us right now as a community to share what we've learned. Like I'm not the only one doing work like this. So we have to share what we've learned with other people and it's my dream that we make this kind of marketing the default. So one of the questions I ask myself all the time is like, would I use this tactic if the world was just, and if the answer is no, then I have to figure something else to

- Tiffany : [17:14](#) yeah, absolutely.
- Kelly : [17:16](#) Another way to think about it. It's like, would this tactic work if the world was just, would all of those diet ads work if people of all sizes were accepted and not discriminated against? No, they wouldn't. That tells us a lot about, okay, what do we do with this?
- Tiffany : [17:33](#) Yeah, absolutely. Sort of like the before and after kind of marketing and that sort of thing. Yeah, exactly. It also makes me think about back when you were talking about triggering shame in people as a marketing tactic. And that made me think about, maybe I think it was just a few weeks ago, I saw an email where you actually wrote an article about shame and about your view on shame and using shame as an awareness tool almost. And I wonder if you could talk about that a little bit because I feel like that can almost be like, Oh, if you feel like shame is triggered, that could be maybe a tool for spotting something that's like maybe not the most empowering sort of technique
- Kelly : [18:17](#) Right. So shame is an unpleasant experience, which is why we have so much literature and so many courses and so many books about how to be more resilient to shame, how to dissolve shame, which is valuable. But before we try to get out of shame, I think shame is actually good information. So yes, it's an unpleasant experience, but it's really good information. It's almost like an alarm bell going off in your life. So shame is a social emotion. So it's only going to happen when there are social or cultural expectations being placed on you. And the shame that you're going to feel is when you feel that you are not meeting those expectations. And our natural tendency is to blame ourselves for not meeting those expectations. So here's what I'd say is whenever you feel shame, understand that it's not actually like something inherent within you because you wouldn't be feeling that if you were naked and alone on a desert Island.
- Kelly : [19:09](#) Right? You only feel some shame when you are in a culture and in a social context. So the question isn't what can I do to meet those expectations? The question is, are those expectations just? Will meeting those expectations produce a more powerful outcome for me and my life and a more powerful, you know, more space in our culture for other people? And most of the time if you ask yourself that question, you'll find out actually I'm being shamed for something and it's not a reasonable expectation. So I have a gazillion children and whenever I feel, whenever I feel like I'm not a productive human and I need to be more this or more that or I need to participate more at their

school and what have you, I sort of asked like is that an expectation that creates more justice in the world? And often it's like, well no, it's not fair that, school boards are cutting funding and downloading the responsibilities for fundraising for our playground onto the mother's shoulders.

Kelly : [20:12](#) Like that's not just, so this expectation that I have to volunteer five hours a week in this fundraising committee is not just, this is, there's nothing wrong with me. I'm not personally lazy. That's not a reasonable expectation. So shame is a good alarm bell in your life for when your culture is downloading responsibilities onto your shoulders that don't belong on your shoulders. So some of the ways you get out of shame is sometimes you just refuse those expectations and you say, you know what, that's not my fault. I'm not defective. There's nothing wrong with me. There's everything wrong with that standard you're asking me to meet.

Tiffany : [20:49](#) Yeah, absolutely. And even if it is something like, you know, for your kids and you feel like, okay, well I'm going to do this anyway because it's for the kids. Like still having that awareness, like to be able to go in and also say, this isn't okay, we need to, well there's that whole idea too of like, I think, you know, you call it like your number one culture making tool. Who gets off the hook, right? That kind of makes me think of that too. Like,

Kelly : [21:18](#) Yeah. So this is actually a perfect example of that. So let's say we need to fundraise for new computers in the classroom because the computer budget has been slashed and naturally you go to the meeting and you look around and you see that like there's 29 people in the room and 28 of them are mothers, their women, and you're going to do it because you want your children and every child to have access to computers and computer literacy. You could also stand up in that meeting and look around and say, I can't help but notice that almost everyone in this room is female and that our school board is downloading its responsibilities to adequately fund our children onto the shoulders of women. And we are already busy. We are already over committed in this culture that expects too much of us. And yes, I'm going to participate, but I want to make a note of that. I want to notice, like let us speak what's real into this room and then let's go home and like pressure our trustees not to do this anymore. Let's tell them we won't vote for them in the next election unless they adequately fund our schools.

Tiffany : [22:27](#) Yes,

- Kelly : [22:29](#) So let's fundraise and let's pressure. Yeah,
- Tiffany : [22:32](#) Exactly. Yeah. Yes, yes. And yes, and. The yes AND, always, right? Yeah. I think that's really important. I think that's, um, like that whole idea of, I mean not only using this whole idea of like to build awareness but, but also to then be able to take action like what needs to be done and take action to cultivate like the necessary change in our culture,
- Kelly : [23:01](#) Right. Because we're not living in the culture that we're dreaming of. Right. The just where those unreasonable expectations no longer exist doesn't exist. So I can't just like walk around pretending that that's the world I live in. I can try and call it forward. I can try and start building the norms in the institutions of the future alongside everyone else who wants to work together. You know? And I still have to navigate where we are right now. So I have to do a million things everyday that I don't think are right. You know, and I have to navigate that reality in order to get to the next one.
- Tiffany : [23:35](#) For sure. Because I think it can also be really shame producing to try to, you know, be fighting all the time and then feel like, Oh, if I do this thing that I know is like a result of some injustice, then I failed, you know, then I'm failing as a feminist. I'm failing as a, you know, ally or whatever we're failing at the moment.
- Kelly : [23:59](#) And that's a setup, right? Because again, we've been born into an unjust culture, right? To then be expected to magically be able to create justice with every one of your actions is, it's just not realistic, right? So we have to figure out what we can do, like what, what levers we can press. And one of the things I think is like, what are you really great at? What's your work? You know, like, I am not a good community organizer, right? I'm just not good at that kind of thing. I'm a really great writer and thinker and a good marketer. So that's my spot. You know, I can just show up. I think of injustice like a wall and I show up on my spot on the wall with my tool. And I just chip away at that one spot and everyone else takes their spot. So the person who's a good community organizer shows up with her chisels, picks away at the wall and eventually the wall comes down. But we all can't do everything. We have to do the, like the one or two things that we are actually good at and go all in on that thing.
- Tiffany : [24:59](#) Yes. Like all caps in bold around that.
- Tiffany : [25:02](#) I'm all in, but like just on the one or two things, heal everything in the world.

- Kelly : [25:11](#) No. And there's other people who will be better at it, then you just do the thing that you're great at.
- Tiffany : [25:18](#) Right. And I, and I think you're right, like one of the things that, you know, when you say one of the things you're good at is like writing, thinking marketing. Yes. And one of the things that I think for me has been, well, I would say, I'll say one of the most like, my most repeated things that I've heard you talk about is the concept of the female lifestyle empowerment brand. And when I heard that, I was like, Oh, I had this idea of what you're talking about when I hear that, because to me that's one thing that I think is starting to be, you know, more and more and more prevalent and almost accepted like that, and I want you to explain what that is, but to me that's almost like become an accepted image that we put out there. But I think it's also super harmful, um, to everyone but specifically to women. So I would love to hear you explain what that is and..
- Kelly : [26:26](#) Sure. It's almost like a fable with a character in a fable. So like once upon a time there were magazines and newspapers and movies and they were controlled by marketing executives and editors. And that was how media was made, right? So there's a specific group of people producing media, including women's media, and that there was narratives coming out of that about what women should be. You know, in women's magazines, there's all these sexist, horrible ads telling women what they should be. Right? And that's where we went to get media. But now where do we go get media? We go to Instagram, we go to Facebook, we go to blogs, we go to Twitter. And there's not an editor creating that that is not being made by like the advertising execs on Madison Avenue that is being made by us, that is being made by my friends that's being made by women who I think are just like me, who I follow, who are like super bendy and flexible and doing amazing things in yoga, on Instagram. And like I'm following other ordinary women who are making media. I make media. Anyone who has an Instagram account is making media. We are now the media makers. There's no gatekeepers. There's no big, bad, um, white man in a suit making negative images of women. Now women are making negative images of women. And so when I'm talking about the female lifestyle empowerment brand, that is if you close your eyes and think about what does a successful woman look like?
- Kelly : [28:09](#) Most of us have an image that pops in our head and I call her kind of like career Barbie. It's going to be a thin white woman with long wavy hair wearing a sheath dress and high heels, smiling, being super likable. She's able bodied, she's

heterosexual, you know, she's sexy but not too sexy. She's, you know, all of those things. And so that narrative, most of us have been raised in that narrative of that is what successful woman looks like. And for those of us who are not that thing, for those of us who are fat or people of color or disabled or queer or, or, or., If those are the only women who are allowed to take up space in our media who are allowed to have rights and resources, who are allowed to be successful and have money, if those are the only women, if that is what you must do in order to be successful, most of us are going to be shut out of that.

Kelly :

[29:07](#)

And so that narrative of like what the ideal woman looks like, that was around for a long time. It's been called a lot of different things, but now the people who are sharing that aren't the magazines and the movies, they're still doing that. But now it's us. It's regular people on their social media accounts and it's women entrepreneurs who have been taught that they have to perform that character on Instagram in order for us to trust her and look to her for leadership and in order for us to buy her stuff. So I just want us to know that because when I go buy a Vogue, I parse it with like a lot of skepticism. I know about weaves, I know about lighting, I know about Photoshop. So like it doesn't affect me because I have a certain lens of media literacy that I'm like, this is not real.

Kelly :

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It doesn't affect me on a deep visceral level like it used to before I even knew those things existed. I want to go on Instagram and I see my friend is selling essential oils or yoga pants. I don't parse her imagery critically. I look at it with trust because it's an ordinary woman like me building a career. So I don't look at her and think, well actually that yoga pose, you know, her daughter is holding her feet and they're cutting her daughter out of the picture. Like I don't look at those things and parse those things critically. But those are the things that happen. And so we are performing these characters for each other and that character is just plain, like sexism. And I don't mean we are trying to be sexist. I mean our culture has trained us that only a particular kind of woman is allowed to have anything in our culture. So we try to be that woman and we try to perform her for other people.

Tiffany :

[30:53](#)

Right? Yeah. And sometimes I think that's so unconscious too. Or even like the act of, you know, self editing, using, nowadays you can edit your photos to kingdom come, using the apps that exist, right. So I think there's, but I've even think about that, like just doing the things that, you know, making sure that all of our images are in right places, you know, traveling or eating, you know, fancy seeming foods or whatever it is that like feels

Kelly : [31:26](#) Exactly. So one of the things I did when I first came on Instagram two years ago, I didn't use to have an Instagram account. The thing about like fancy foods, I noticed that on Instagram that we're only gonna show like fresh vegetables and fresh fruit or elaborate meals. And so one of the first things I did was I took a bag of Doritos and put it in a beautiful white bowl, put it in the windows who was all back lit and glowing and took like a closeup of it and posted it because I was like, this is ridiculous that we are signaling righteousness with like strawberry and kale and no one's in there like cop to eating a Dorito. So that kind of just frustrated me. So I was like, let me make media in a different way. I can still be totally artistic and take this gorgeous shot, but play with the expectation that thou shalt only eat Holy food. You know, I can play with that.

Tiffany : [32:18](#) Yes. And I think that's so important because I've, I go back and I've like scrolled through my personal or my professional Instagram and so often it is, it's like I wouldn't even, you know, I would have pause about even taking a picture of myself, you know, eating anything that could, you know, like I, I certainly, I go to post myself in a picture eating ice cream. Right. But I definitely thought about it when I was posting and I was like, Ooh, eating an ice cream. Or like, I don't think I've ever posted myself in a picture, you know, with a big old burger or like it's something like that. Or even just thinking about wanting to post the pictures that are in a beautiful location or that are in a place where it signals some sort of like wealth or class.

Kelly : [33:15](#) And that's not just you. I say, I don't think that's you being defective, right? Like what that is is there is backlash and there is punishment that happens when we deviate from being the perfect woman doing the perfect things. So I saw once, and this is sort of when the light bulb went off in my head, it's one of the things that added up to, Oh we have to do this differently. So I was reading a blog post and the woman had a picture of her and her kids and she was talking about something.... I think she was talking about her new recruiting agency where she was like recruiting moms who want to stay at home, but pick up little side gigs here and there. So it was a recruiting agency. So she had a picture of her kid, she's in her living room, she's talking, and there a whole bunch of comments behind the blog post talking about what a bad mother she was because behind her on the wall there was a light switch that didn't have a plate on it because her house was under renovation.

Kelly : [34:11](#) And they're like, that's so dangerous. And maybe instead of trying to build a business, you should be putting, you know, fixing your house so that's not a danger for your children. And I

was like, first of all, eagle eye that people are noticing the light switch on the wall instead of actually noticing you and I just realized that everything women do is under scrutiny and it's an opportunity for tell you, telling you how you're not living up to the female lifestyle empowerment brand or the perfect woman. And I notice myself editing myself too because we don't want to get punished, right? The consequences are real. And I noticed that I took a picture, a really cute picture of my kid doing something sweet and then I looked at it and was about to post it and I stopped because there was a wet towel hanging on the back of the chair behind him. And I like, I couldn't post a picture with a towel hanging on the chair in the living room. And then I tried to get him to do it again. Who wouldn't?

Kelly :

[35:07](#)

But again, what I'm trying to say is we have to stop editing ourselves like that and we do it because there's actually a material threat. We get punished. There is backlash. That's real. And the way that we start pushing back on that is actually by showing up as real. Like I'm a fat woman. It's important for me to take pictures of my whole self and put it on my feed so that I take up space and there's another woman out who's like, Oh I can do this right. I actually can put pictures of myself out there. And there's many marketing academies designed for women entrepreneurs that you go there, the first thing they do is tell you, you need to get a professional photo shoot, preferably in front of like the Eiffel tower or wearing a flowing maxi dress and they specifically tell you to signal wealth in your photos.

Kelly :

[36:00](#)

So have a glass of champagne, be here, be there, rent a house for a day and get your photos taken in that house instead of your like miserable house with Formica countertops, right? You are supposed to signal those things in order for people to accept you as a successful person who then you buy from and follow and offer your fellowship as a leader to, that they're a leader. So I'm trying to say two things. One, we have to take up space as we are so that other people can do it. And that's how we start shifting norms and we have to understand that there is actually backlash and take care of each other when there's backlash. So when you see that going down on someone's page, like speak up for them.

Tiffany :

[36:40](#)

Yeah, yeah. Because there is so much of that, especially on social media, that's, it's a scary world, right? If you're going to go and post things that are real on social media. And, two, I think there is this whole thing about, just completely like dumping on people for making mistakes too on social media, right? Like, you know, we're talking about all of these things that are all over the place, that are being like, you know, I look

back into my feed and I'm like, wow, I really have done this. And, and so like I think there is also that place of like not looking at the people that are like the women that are out there trying to make it and, and making them the villain. Because I wonder about that too. I feel like that's so easy to do as a like makes it individuals that are sort of operating on this status quo, making them the villain instead of like looking at what is the real...

Kelly : [37:53](#) I don't name names, right? Cause I'm not here to take an individual, a woman's business down. What I'm trying to do is name pattern that some of us are conforming to subconsciously. And then some of us are getting trained to leverage it. So it's one thing to like scoop the towel up off the back of the chair. You know? And it's another thing to think how can I deliberately manufacture privilege and authority so that people obey me? Mmm. And let us not be naive about that. What I'm talking about, the female lifestyle empowerment brand, there are a number women who specifically, deliberately do that. There's some people who just unconsciously do it because those are the marketing standards and that's what we get taught. And there are some people who are like, how can I signal wealth and privilege in this photograph so that people will obey me?

Tiffany : [38:53](#) Yes, great distinction. Great distinction. And then you know, can we not at least not do that ourselves, right? At the very least.

Kelly : [39:02](#) And so I mean for me I think about like what's the best use of my effort and my labor and my, the best use of my effort and my labor isn't trying to move the immoveables. The people who are deliberately doing this, that's not the best use of my time and labor. I tried several years ago. I wrote emails, I reached out through friends of friends and like nothing, right or dismissive responses. People who know that they are doing this, it works for them. They're making millions off of it. People who don't know that they're doing this or who get trained in those methods and feel icky about them and then can't market their stuff because they feel terrible about their tactics. Like those people, I've got some resources for them. I'm gonna put all my effort and love into the people who actually want to do something different. And I'm gonna put all my effort into making sure my work is it different. I can control my own marketing. I can't control, you know, some evil marketers empire.

Tiffany : [40:01](#) Right. Yeah. Or you know, some huge corporation or something like that. Yeah. For sure. And so you're, um, you're writing a book about all this?

- Kelly : [40:10](#) I am. I'm writing a book called, We Are The Culture Makers because I truly believe that women and girls and teenage girls especially and marginalized people have always been the culture makers. So for example, there is no pop star who can ever get famous without teenage girls. They are the people who make pop stars famous. Right. The Beatles wouldn't have been anything without teenage girls. You know. The teenage girls are the culture makers. They are the ones who decide who is going to succeed or not succeed. You know in the cultural space. Women for a long time have been the ones who dedicated their domestic and life giving efforts to making sure the men in their family could pursue their careers and their creative projects. You know, we have always been the ones who facilitated culture and many times across different marginalized groups, the things that they made were appropriated and stolen and turned into famous cultural products. So we have always been the culture makers. So we're literally like the antidote. We are the ones who can use that power to create a new future. And it involves internally, we have to get through free of that social conditioning, that career Barbie image of like what we have to be in order to show up. We have to show up as we are and use our gifts to create a new culture.
- Tiffany : [41:41](#) Yes. Awesome. So we definitely need to read that book in order to help us do that. When is it coming out?
- Kelly : [41:49](#) I don't know when it's coming out. I just signed with an agent. I'm working on it this summer, so hopefully will be trying to sell it in the fall.
- Tiffany : [41:56](#) Awesome. I'm so excited about that for sure. And, Oh gosh, I feel like we've covered so much already. Is there anything else that you want to say to the people?
- Kelly : [42:08](#) You know, I guess I just want to come back to like, we all have such enormous power and it takes a lot of courage to break the backlash. And one of the ways that we do that is making sure that we're not doing it on our own. Like it's really easy to take one woman down. It's hard to take all of us down. So it really is on us to like reach out when we are feeling scared about putting something in the world and have some people to like encourage you and bolster you and send some emails on your behalf and like be your champions and signal boost. So when I was talking about like all the damage we can do on Instagram or on social media, by posting these negative narratives around women, even when we're doing it unconsciously, we can do an enormous amount of positive things on Instagram by sharing people's work who really matters. We can signal boost and we

can make other people famous. You know, we can make people like Lindy West famous, we did that, right? Like we can share stuff that is creating a new world. Like I said, nobody gets famous without us, right? So let's decide who we want to make famous.

Tiffany : [43:16](#) Absolutely. What have been some of your best resources and best techniques for sort of building that collected, that supports finding that group?

Kelly : [43:29](#) I mean, look around in your life and see who wants to be there, right? And talk to them honestly about what you're trying to accomplish and ask them what they're trying to accomplish. So for example, when I couldn't afford childcare, there was a nurse who lived across the street and she couldn't afford childcare either. And she had two kids and I had two kids. And now I have like a gazillion kids. But anyways, we swap days. So the three days a week that she worked, I took her kids and then I had three days where she took my kids and I would write and work on my business. So like, look in your real life, who wants to show up for you and help you make things happen. That would be the number one thing. You need a real community. You need people who want to be in your life and who are there for you to help you make it happen and then you're there for them too.

Tiffany : [44:13](#) Absolutely. And then, what do you do as far as on your social media? Like, do you curate your social media in a certain way? Do you, what recommendations do you have there?

Kelly : [44:26](#) Post more pictures of Doritos. Like wherever you feel itchy, like, Oh, I shouldn't put that out there. That's probably exactly what needs to be out there. And so start showing up. So I literally bought a selfie stick so I can start taking the longer pictures and put my body in the photo. So I'm not just a floating beautiful little head. That's a fat body that people are gonna start seeing. So like show up as you are, where there's an itch or an uncomfortable feeling when you were supposed to publish something, like put the, put the towel on the chair, leave the child on the chair, take a picture of you with no makeup on, like just show up as you are.

Tiffany : [45:06](#) I love that. And maybe find other people that are already doing that to like give you courage.

Kelly : [45:11](#) Oh you know what? This is great advice. It's not my advice. Summer Innanen has a podcast called Fearless Rebelle and she is specifically against diet culture, but she says there's one diet we can all go on and that is unfollow everyone who makes you

feel bad. So all the skinny, bendy people who make you feel terrible about your body just unfollow them. Stop having that in your life. Everyone who's promoting diet culture and telling you that these foods are good and these wounds are bad and you're not allowed to be that size. Stop following them. Like, just break up with all of that. So people who make you feel terrible about yourself, stop following them and start following people who are helping create the world that you want to call forward.

Tiffany : [45:58](#) Absolutely. And I love that advice. And I think too, I've even used social media to almost reprogram what I see as normal because all of a sudden, you know, I realize if I, if I looked at an image and I had a reaction that was like a negative reaction toward it and it was just like a normal person, a normal body, someone doing a normal thing, a food that I had previously thought of as like an evil food. I mean, so that then I'm thinking, Oh, okay, I need to see more of that.

Kelly : [46:34](#) Right. That's your cultural conditioning, right? Like that's true. And wherever we had that reaction that you usually cultural conditioning at work. So Lindy West in her book *Shrill* said the number one thing that she did to start loving herself as a fat woman was look, go online and look at pictures of fat people until it no longer grossed her out. Yes, yes. So that's what we do is like change your cultural parameters and your own... We can unravel our own cognitive biases and our own unconscious biases. So notice again, like notice the shame when it comes up. That's a cultural expectation that's being placed on you. You can decide what you want to do about it. And notice when you feel uncomfortable expressing yourself in a particular way or other people's expressions make you feel uncomfortable because again, like that's a little alarm going off. Like there's cultural conditioning going on here and you can choose whether or not you want to accept it.

Tiffany : [47:34](#) Absolutely. Yes. I think that's super important. And I love that, that that can be a such a positive use for media and social media too because it might be that, you know, because of stigma, you may not actually see that in your real life. You may not actually see these things, like people being real, even in your real life because there's so much stigma and shame around that. So it's like the people that are putting it out there on social media as a really good opportunity to actually kind of change our, our cultural view.

Kelly : [48:10](#) I also think that, you know, we've talked a lot today and I talk a lot about like about how damaging media and social media in particular can be, you know, and it is enormously affirming in

other places. So for a queer kid who is in a hostile environment, social media might be the only place that they feel like they're welcome and loved and accepted. For me, when I first came online and had a blog and all of those things in 2008/2009, I was a single mom of two kids and I had no money for anything, especially not childcare. And so when they went to bed at eight o'clock, I would go on Twitter and talk to people and that was my only form of social connection and I found a community and nine years later, some of those people are my dearest friends. For real. It's not just a performance on Twitter. So social media can be where you find your community and where you become affirmed in your identity instead of rejected and isolated. So social media can have healing powers. It all depends on how we use it.

- Tiffany : [49:20](#) Absolutely. And I think that what you said is spot on because so many people look around themselves and don't actually see themselves. It's so, so isolating. So social media in that way, you know, I always think like okay, if there's something about me that I feel really isolated in, like that would be the place to go. For me it would be go to social media and find other people that exhibit that that are that because then it's like, Oh yeah, I'm not so alone. And also social media isn't evil. I can participate and not feel terrible about myself. It is possible.
- Kelly : [50:00](#) Yeah. I was just thinking like the world is huge. Whatever your identity is or whatever place that you're feeling isolated and alienated. There are thousands and hundreds of thousands of people just like you. We just need to go find each other, you know? And that's part of being human is like, we're not meant to be alone. We are not meant to be alone. So let's find each other.
- Tiffany : [50:20](#) Yes, let's find each other. Let's support each other. Let's love each other. And let's help each other shift for the better, I think too. So you do a lot of amazing things. Can you tell people where they can find you?
- Kelly : [50:37](#) Sure. You can find me on my website, which is kellydiels.com. It's spelled D I E L s.com. And I teach monthly workshops online about feminist marketing. I have a feminist copywriting certification program. And you can also find me on Instagram, also Facebook, but mostly Instagram [@kelley.diels](https://www.instagram.com/kelley.diels).
- Tiffany : [51:01](#) Awesome. Thank you so much. I am so grateful for your wisdom. Uh, this is such an amazing conversation. I can't wait to listen to it again.

Kelly :

[51:10](#)

Well, thank you for having me, Tiffany. I loved having this conversation with you and thank you to everyone who's listening to us right now. Like, I appreciate your time and attention. It's truly a gift.