

Pretty Curious with Jonathan Van Ness & Lisa Price

JVN Hey, curious people. Welcome back to Pretty Curious our podcast on all things beauty. I'm Jonathan Van Ness, Happy Monday, and if you're not listening to this on Monday, that's ok because sometimes it takes us a minute to listen to our podcasts. In the meantime, this week, we're talking to Lisa Price who is the founder of Carol's Daughter. We're going to talk all about her journey and making hair care products in her kitchen to becoming one of the most sought after hair care brands in the industry. She's worked with people like Jada Pinkett Smith, Erykah Badu, Rosie Perez, Halle Berry and Oprah Winfrey also, can I just say that my conversation in connection with Lisa Price meant so much to me and she made me cry like thrice. So this episode is so beautiful. I'm obsessed with her experience. She's incredible. But before we get to our conversation, it's time to get ready with me.

This is what I want to say: so because I'm traveling to London and I love, you know - I love my products and I also love my JVN Hair, but we don't have a travel size bottles sometimes and there's also other skincare that I want to use that isn't travel sized. Um So I discovered this brand. They're, I think they're called Ries R-I-E-S. Ries Travel bottles. I use them all the time. Their vibe is like, say goodbye to single use. They're female founded and these bottles are just amazing. You can like twist the top so it doesn't come out. I use them all the time on my travel. I do shampoo conditioner body wash. It's so nice. So I love them. They're like they're sold at Sephora. I mean, you can get a set of five for like 70 bucks, but I mean, I'm so hard on mine. I throw them around, they never explode or untwist or mess me up and there's nothing more frustrating than like when you're traveling and your foundation explodes in your bag or whatever like in your little beauty bag. Like I hate it when things open or spill. So whether it's Ries or Ries, that's for another day. But in the meantime, Ries travel bottles. Get your life, get it together, get your summer, get your summer travel on in style without exploding bottles. I love her. I love the founder and I love this brand. So get it together.

It's time for us to talk to Lisa Price, the founder of Carol's daughter. We love her so much again. I love this conversation. Let's do, let's let's do Lisa Price's bio please. Lisa Price started Carol's Daughter out of her kitchen in 1993. And now the brand has over 300 aromatic products for the face, hair, body and home. What a difference 10-20 - what a difference 30 years makes! Ok. Her clientele includes celebrities like Jada Pickett Smith Halle, Berry Chaka, Khan, Oprah Winfrey. During the Obama administration, Lisa was appointed to the National Women's Business Council. God I'm attracted to Barack Obama sidebar. Anyway, she's also the author of Success Never Smelled So Sweet. Also his hyper realistic official portrait at the White House was next level. A memoir that chronicles her transformation from a young Black woman deep in debt to a President of a paradigm changing business. In 2021. Carol's daughter partnered with the world renowned Doula, Latham Thomas, to launch Love Delivered an initiative focused on raising awareness of the Black maternal health crisis in the United States. Lisa is also a part of the executive committee at l'oreal USA giving her perspective on Black culture, diversity, equality and inclusion and organizational topics.

Hi, Lisa, welcome to Getting Curious. How are you?

LISA PRICE I am great, I am really, really great. I'm super excited to be doing this with you. I am a huge fan of you and *Queer Eye*. But you in particular, it's a little off topic for me from what I know we're going to talk about, but I just wanted to share with you one of my children, is trans, and she started out as non-binary and then trans. And you were how I learned. What that was and wasn't. And I just so appreciate that. Just watching you and watching how you how you live and following you and it, it, it gave me, touchpoints and language and, process and, and questions that I could ask because at the time that she started HRT, she was away in school in Atlanta and we were going through Covid. So traveling home was really difficult. So there was this concern that I had about is the person who's going to come home no longer look like the person that left. And I didn't know how to have that conversation. And just watching you, you know, on the show and the way you interact with people and and how honest you are. I was like, you know what? I'll just I'll just ask. I'll just talk to her and I'll just see. And so I just I have this special bond with you because of that. And I'm just so appreciative of how you share, because I know that that's not an easy thing to do, but you share in such a loving way and in your sharing you teach other people. So I'm just so grateful for that and happy to be with you today and to finally be able to tell you that.

JVN That well made me cry. Didn't mean I hit. No, no. Oh, no. Thank you so much. I, I mean, I was crying. Oh, I just, like, really made it. Made my full lap. Go. It did. So. But back to 1993. Yeah. Carol's daughter. Honey, this is just such an iconic brand. What made you decide to just start Carol's Daughter and. And also one other thing. Just to go a little deeper. Were you frustrated with, like, the type of products that you or that were marketed and, like, given to people with textured hair and like, were you like, I need better stuff for my natural hair or what was the vibe?

LISA PRICE Well, initially the vibe in 1993 was I was super passionate about fragrance. I was mildly obsessed with it, and I wanted to make moisturizers that smelled really beautiful. So I actually started with body care and in going out and selling at flea markets and craft fairs, taking my body butters with me and my fragrances, people would come up to me and ask me for products for hair. I need something to make my hair softer. I want something to moisturize my scalp. And so I was like, oh, you know what? I have to make some hair care products because the body isn't all that they want. They want more than that. And some people don't want body at all. They want hair care. So I started to learn about essential oils and herbs and things for haircare and in developing haircare, initially for what I thought was going to be other people. I learned that I had been settling for so long with just whatever was out there, and I started to learn my curls better, learn my texture better, learned that I didn't have to settle for, oh, today's just going to be a frizzy day. Today's going to be a day where there's no definition. And it was something that I felt like I was doing for someone else at first, but then ultimately realized I was helping myself as well. And that was when I realized what a void there was in the marketplace that, you know, these things just didn't exist. And someone like me was just settling for, well, this is all I've got. Oh, well, you know, but I didn't have to settle anymore.

JVN So you're so you got your start by, like, crafting, like homemade batches and then taking in. Were you in like like what area were you in?

LISA PRICE I lived and still do in Brooklyn, New York. At that time I was living in a neighborhood called Fort Greene, Clinton Hill, that area. And I would go to different craft fairs. I worked in television production for my real job, and then I did this, like on the

weekends. And once the weather started to shift and there weren't that many outdoor things happening, people were calling me and saying, you know, I need to get more of the cream that I bought from you this summer. Where can I go to get it? Where are you sold? And I was like, well, you could come to my apartment, you can come by on Saturday and pick it up. And that was this unofficial start of me selling in my apartment and kind of not being able to leave on the weekends because I never knew who was going to ring my doorbell looking for products.

JVN So how long does this continue? Until you're like, I'm leaving TV. Like, I accidentally just sold this to Bergdorf's or wherever you sold Carol's daughter to first, because I feel like getting into retailers and, like, was it different, like Pre-social media?

LISA PRICE Oh, very, very different. It was very different. So 1993 is when I started. 1990 6th March of 96. Great year. I'm getting ready to give birth to my first kid. And so I start looking at the numbers and I'm like, okay, I'm working in television Monday through Thursday at this point. Every evening and every weekend. I'm working the business. So when I did the math, if I kept my job, I would basically just give a paycheck to a babysitter and never see my child because they just weren't enough hours in the day. So it logically made sense to give up television production and invest the time into the business and be able to do something that I could do from home and still be able to be a mom to our son. So that's how I left television production behind and pursued being an entrepreneur full time. It wasn't as scary initially because logically the numbers made sense. It got scarier a little bit later when child number two comes along, when husband loses the gig that he had with the medical insurance that went with it, and then it's all hands on deck with the business, because now the business has to pay the mortgage and take care of two babies. So that's when it got, like, scary. But, I've always been grateful for my journey being the way that it was slower. It's not everybody's path, but because it grew this way, I got to grow as a business person with it. There are times when being in business for yourself can really be overwhelming and daunting, and there's so much that you don't know and you're learning as you go along. And I think if I had had tremendous, you know, success that I didn't even understand early on, I wouldn't still be here 31 years later.

JVN Okay, so it's 96. Michelle Kwan is world champion. She's about to win again in 98. What happens through like, the end of the 90s into like where? Like when does Carol's daughter go into, like, its first like major retailer and you're like.

LISA PRICE Holy shit. Well, 96 through 99, we stay at home based business. So we bought this house two months after our son was born and everything was here. Selling was here, production was here, shipping was here, we lived here. All of that happened under this roof. In 99, I opened up my first retail store outside of my home. Like actually a store on a street that people could walk into with windows and not be in my living room shopping. In 2000. Early 2000, we had a commerce website where people could shop. In 2002, I got to go on The Oprah Winfrey Show, which was like, amazing. And broke my website and all of that. But it was something a lot of people thought that because I went on Oprah, you know, all of a sudden I became a millionaire and I never had to work another day in my life. Not at all. What it did was it validated the company in a lot of people's eyes at that time, because at this time we still don't have social media. So you don't. You don't get to build something in front of people and sort of show them who you are, the way that you could do today on social. You

just show up and hope that they accept you. So that was a big stepping stone to accepting. We had retail, distribution, but it was like independent hair salons. Somebody who has a really cool clothing boutique and they have some body care products on the side, a general store in Park Slope, Brooklyn, but not a retailer. Retailer. That didn't happen until 2005 when we launched in Sephora. I took on a major business event, investor, in 2003. His name was Steve Stoute, and Steve and I together brought in a celebrity investment team, and that team included Will Smith and Jada Pinkett Smith, Jay-Z. And in 2005, we launched in Sephora and then 2006 launched in Macy's.

JVN That makes sense with my timeline of remembrance. That is so cool.

LISA PRICE Yes, yes.

JVN So tell us about Love Delivered and what inspired you to get involved?

LISA PRICE Well, we were the company. We were at a place where. We wanted to focus our attention on a specific path when it came to philanthropy. I wanted this this one thing that would always be our focus. And, you know, being in a big company now, there's a process that they will go through where they'll sort of test the waters and do social listening. And so they came back with, it would be really great if you focused on maternal health. And it was just kind of maternal health in general. And that is important. Obviously. In this country, we, you know, based on the rest of the the free world, we ranked, I believe, 12 in, in level of care that we provide for mothers. And Latham was a really good friend of mine, Latham Thomas, and she was a doula. And I said, you know, this is Latham's world. If there's somebody out there, I bet she knows who it is. And during the pandemic, I got very, accustomed to leaving people audio messages. And I would leave Latham these great audio messages and I, you know, I had this idea. And what do you think? And do you know of anybody out there because, you know, I think this is the right philanthropy for Carol's daughter. And Latham let me know that she was in the process of setting up her 501 see. And Mom Aglow was going to be a foundation dedicated to this work. So we got to, as Latham puts it, birthed that baby together. And in 2021, we launched Love Delivered. And it has been such a labor of love, not just for me and not just for Latham, but for our teams as well. You know, you're you're when you see your PR team volunteering to do events, volunteering to go to conferences, you know, volunteering to be away from their families because they so believe in the the mission and the work and because then you really know that you're onto the right thing.

JVN And people are really passionate about maternal health, supporting maternal health. Does love delivered like take volunteers are like, can people get involved with that if they wanted to, or can they donate to Love Delivered? Or is it just about like by Carol's daughter because like some amount goes to love delivered or like how can people support it if they want to?

LISA PRICE You can donate to Mama Glo for sure. You what Mama Glo does is they provide doula training, but they also provide doula services to families that may not be able to afford it. So there are grants that people apply for in order to have doula services. And Carol's daughter contributes towards those grants. There's money that we put into Mama Glo to help fund those grants. And we're in five, cities now throughout the country where those services can be applied for. There's a number of people that have been connected

through the brand, either through friendship with me or working on the brands that have become doulas, just, listening to this information so they have other careers in other places, but they actually went through the do a training so that they could be a support to other people when they're going through the birthing process, which I just to me, that was just I didn't even expect that to be an outcome, of this process. But, everything about what we do, I mean, there's, there's lots and lots of work, but it's, it's one of those things where you can see the reward in the moment.

JVN And people are like, I haven't tried Carol's daughter and I got some waves, I got some quilts, I got some kings, I got some little, where do they start? What do they need to get into? What's your favorites? Like how can people find their Carol's Daughter cocktail? Like what's your favorite in your line?

LISA PRICE In my line. The faves are definitely got a strength. The shampoo and conditioner are just phenomenal. The shampoo and goddess strength is a cream shampoo, so if somebody maybe doesn't want a cream shampoo for some people, don't they prefer a gel? The black vanilla is more of a gel shampoo. But very, very moisturizing. So between goddess and black vanilla, the ranges are pretty extensive. People can find what they need. There's an amazing mask in goddess strength called the cocoon mask that I just love. It just wraps your hair in moisture. The goddess hair oil is incredible. The black vanilla leave in conditioner. I created that in 1997. It is still like a top five selling item today. And it was the only black vanilla product that I ever had for, like, 6 or 7 years. And then one day, one of those marketing geniuses that came to work with the company, they were like, you need a whole line of black vanilla because you sell eight times more black vanilla leave-in than any other product in this entire company. So those are two areas that are a good place to start. The goddess strength in the black vanilla. Lots of great offerings there. You can get a lot of information on our website. To help choose and look at lots of tutorial videos. Our YouTube channel. There's lots of information out there to help you pick.

JVN What's your advice? And, and if you're listening to this, like, what's your advice to any entrepreneur that wants to grow their business in any way? And we're starting to wrap up, but, but what any advice for entrepreneurs?

LISA PRICE Yeah, I always tell entrepreneurs that they are the ones that decide where their business goes and how it gets there. What is it going to look like when it shows up? You know, what is it wearing? What's you know, what's it going to say? Those are all of the things that you are in charge of. So you have to know what that looks like. And yes, you have to listen to the consumer. You have to listen to your advisors. But it has to be a collaborative effort. You can't always be right as the founder, even though as the founder, it's sort of built into your job that you should feel that way, that you are always right. But I compare it to raising children as a parent. There are certain things that we feel our children must do, especially when they are certain ages. No, you cannot walk across the street by yourself because you're three, and you don't understand what that means to look left and right and stop and wait. You're not old enough to understand that. So until you're old enough to understand that I can't let you walk across the street by yourself. So when your company is really new and small and, you know, getting getting its feet, you have to dictate a lot of what it does. But when it starts to have its own voice and sort of have a life a little bit separate from you, then you have to look at it from an advisory perspective. So some in some ways,

parents become advisors and counselors to their kids. And we can't be parents in the same way that we were. And so I look at Carol's daughter as one of my children. I look at her, I watched her grow, and I helped her go out into the world in the best way possible. But I always listen to other people along the way. We get advice for our kids on what school they should go to, what camp they should go to, but a camp counselor doesn't tell us how to raise them. And so you ultimately have to know that vision and that direction, how you get there. You can collaborate with other people and negotiate with other people on how to get there and what the language is and what it looks like. But you have to know the destiny within.

JVN Okay. Oh, also, what's new this year for Carol's daughter? Is there anything that we need to keep our eyes peeled for? Like, ready to celebrate?

LISA PRICE There is, two products that have come out this year that have added to our styling range. There's black vanilla, moisture jelly, which gives you great hold and shine without flaking, without buildup, and lots of moisture. And there's a smoothing balm within body strength that will give you a straight, look on your on your sides for like a sleek pony or slicked back styles, but a matte look, but without being hard so you can restyle. So there are products that do give you a matte look and sleek your hair down, but then you got to wash it to get it off because it's not going to comb off. Hours will comb off. So that's for 2024. And there's great stuff coming for 2025 for sure. And this year we got to announce in April that we have Coco Gauff as a partner. We are her official hair sponsor casual and will be. Yes. And we will be for the next three years. And she is a phenomenal person as well as tennis player. And it has been wonderful to work with her. Yeah, yeah.

JVN So not to name drop Lisa, but I got to watch her and her semifinal last year. At the US open. She made me laugh. She made me cry, scream, feel all my all my emotions. I really love Coco and that. Did you ever seen that video of, like, an eight year old Coco? Like walking behind Venus Williams? Yeah. Oh my gosh, I love Coco. She's so I follow this on her Instagram, I love her. I cannot wait to see Carol's daughter all over there. And you better get that. Good. You better get at least. Okay. It's our final round because it's so good that you've been so patient with me. Thank you so much for being the most amazing guest. But it's our rapid fire round. Okay. So. Okay. What is your go to budget beauty recommendation? Under \$10. Ooh.

LISA PRICE Baby lotion.

JVN Oh, yes. You better hit us with the curve splurge recommendation.

LISA PRICE Oh, splurge. Oh, my goodness. It's got to be fragrance. Always Frederick Mall, carnal flower.

JVN I'm writing that down. What's a product you never leave home without?

LISA PRICE Ooh. Never leave home without my goddess strength. Divine strength. Leave in cream.

JVN Who made those earrings?

LISA PRICE What am I wearing today? Oh, these are from my friend on new. Her company is on new essentials. Baroque pearls and aquamarine crystals. Oh.

JVN That's pretty. That wasn't even on the list of questions, but I had to ask you those. Pretty, what's your favorite vintage beauty look? It could be like a photo shoot. It could be like a movie, a character, an idea.

LISA PRICE Diana Ross, Mahogany.

JVN Do you know that you're like our fourth person in history who said that? Like that is. And I think she's our only repeat. I think Diana Ross in Mahogany is like our only repeat. Everyone comes back. It's all it's funny because.

LISA PRICE But she would she was giving an image of a black woman that we didn't always get to see in film. In that film, the fashion, the the makeup, the glam of it. It was it. Yeah.

JVN Yeah. That hair is so iconic. The looks are just too iconic. Okay. Final segment. It's still within the third one. Believe it or not, man or major. The round cut.

LISA PRICE Man.

JVN Blunt fringe.

LISA PRICE Man.

JVN Hair cycling.

LISA PRICE Oh, I don't know what that is.

JVN It's like doing like moisture for a couple days. Protein for a couple. Like like cycling your goal.

LISA PRICE Oh, that that that sounds major. I didn't know what that was, but that sounds major. That's that I like that.

JVN I'm so eager to hear what you say about this. Shampoo and conditioning bars. Shampoo and conditioner.

LISA PRICE Bars. Carol's daughter did have a shampoo bar. It didn't do very well. People weren't ready for it, so unfortunately it was discontinued. But the technology on shampoo bars is so much better than what it used to be. And the conditioning bars are getting even better. And I think it's really necessary to have alternatives. And especially for people that have to travel, it allows you to put something solid in the bag instead of having to put a liquid. The sustainability aspect of it, you don't have to worry about plastic. It the sensorial thing, I think, is what's challenging. It's hard to envision a bar being a conditioner in the same way as a cream conditioner. I don't think it will replace it, but I think that option should be available. And now that they're being made more lush and. Moisturizing and less stripping. It's on its way to being major. It's not mere, but it's it's on its way to being major.

JVN How its scalp treatment.

LISA PRICE Major. Absolutely major.

JVN Flat irons.

LISA PRICE Major. As long as you don't overdo it. Because the flat iron is to help you with a straight look. But if you have split ends, if you have dry, brittle parts of your hair, then you have to moisturize and you have to cut those ends. The more you put that flat iron on a split end, you just making it. It is frying. It is not going to make it better.

JVN Denman brush.

LISA PRICE Major.

JVN Silk pillowcases.

LISA PRICE Major.

JVN Dry shampoo.

LISA PRICE Major.

JVN I think that's all. Lisa, thank you so much for coming. I'm pretty curious. We love you so much. What's on the horizon for you and where can people follow you? Where are you the most active on the social Instagram?

LISA PRICE I am Lisa Price and Carrie Masher is also on Instagram. As Carol's daughter.

JVN I love you so much Lisa! Thank you so much for coming. I'm pretty curious. We appreciate it so much.

LISA PRICE Thank you.

JVN You've been listening to Pretty Curious with me, Jonathan Van Ness. You can learn more about this week's guest in the episode description and follow us on Instagram and TikTok @CuriousWithJVN. Pretty Curious, drops every Monday. Wherever you get your podcasts and make sure to tune in every Wednesday for Getting Curious. Still can't get enough? Honey! You're insatiable! Subscribe to Extra Curious on Apple Podcasts for commercial free listening and our subscription only show. Ask JVN, we we're talking all about sex, relationships or really just whatever's on my mind that week. Our theme music is composed by Nathanael McClure. Come on. Nathnael, our editor and engineer is also Nathanael McClure. Yes, Getting Curious is produced by me, Chris McClure and Julia Melfi, with production support from Julie Carrillo, Anne Currie and Chad Hall.