

Layla F. Saad: Hello everybody and welcome to another episode of Good Ancestor Podcast. Today I'm here with our second white guest of the podcast, uh someone who I'm really interested in speaking to. We're speaking today with Glennon Doyle. Glennon is the author of the Number One New York Times Bestseller Love Warrior, a 2016 Oprah's Book Club Selection as well as the New York Times Bestseller, Carry on Warrior. She's the Founder and President of Together Rising, a nonprofit organization that has raised \$15.5 million for women, families and children in crisis. Glennon is an activist, a speaker, and a thought leader who believes that a love warrior's journey is to rush towards her pain and to allow her pain to become her power. She lives in Florida with her wife and her three children. Welcome to the show, Glennon.

Glennon Doyle: Thank you Layla.

Layla: I'm very excited to be having this conversation with you. And, just for, um, our listeners, um, just, just so our listeners know, you and I have had a couple of conversations now before we've hit record on this podcast because we both understand in the work that I do around Me and White Supremacy and white feminism and the work that you are doing in your own privilege that this and anytime I have a white guest on that the conversation is different to when I have guests who are people of color. Um, but I feel very strongly in bringing on a few, um, as you said when we had our conversation, a few token white people to have these conversations because they're important.

Glennon: Well, I appreciate it. I appreciate you inviting me here. I've listened to your other podcasts, of course, as you know, and um even as we spoke about, um, let's get awkward. Let's just take the risk and jump in.

Layla: Absolutely. Yup. Okay, let's jump in. So our first question that goes out to all guests, who are some of the ancestors living or transitioned familial or societal, who have influenced you on your journey?

Glennon: Yes, I thought about this question when I was listening to your other podcasts. And at first all these famous people popped into my mind. And then I really started thinking about my parents. Um, I think when I think about truly who has deeply influenced the way I move in the world, it's the two of them. They were both educators. Um, my mother was a Spanish teacher and then a guidance counselor. And my dad was a football coach and an English teacher, and then a principal. Um, and it was just understood in my family that what you do with your life and yourself is you just serve children basically. I mean, that wasn't the whole entire, my whole entire family's mission and passion. And so, when I graduated from college, I went into teaching because that's just what we did. Um, I've worked in the same type of school my parents did, they, oh, they worked in largely underserved schools and um, work their butts off. And it was never, I don't ever remember them talking about it. They just did it, you know, it was just a way of being. Um, and so I spent most of my career before I started writing. I was a teacher. I was a third grade teacher. Um, and I worked in right outside of Washington, DC at what we called a Title One school. So almost all of

my kids were recent immigrants. And, um, I think at one point I had seven languages in my class and we also had full inclusion, so we had some nonverbal kids. Um, and I remember, so the amazing thing about education is being part of education is you just really get to see firsthand how systems that affect human being's livelihoods and future are, are so rigged. You know? I mean, we did this when I started teaching is when we, when standardized testing went crazy, where in our country, where basically everything just started to become based upon how you performed on standardized tests.

Layla: Hmm.

Glennon: And I just remember, you know, these children that I had in my classroom were so brilliant and um, really, uh, it was, was a little biased, but I would say ha--, having to be much more brilliant than most children in the system because they were coming into a brand new culture and a brand new place and having to navigate all of it. Um, and then Layla, the county would put these freaking tests in front of them. Now if you can imagine about like, and the performance on that test would determine everything like they--, they'll say it doesn't, but it does. That's when kids start getting tracked. That's when, um, and, and you know, imagine your child going to another country, not speaking the language at all. And then, you know, two months later somebody putting a test in front of them in that language to determine their intelligence pretty much and their, their future potential. So that's when I really started to figure, so my first book, Layla, which I was just thinking about this morning because I got a \$7 royalty check last week from it--

Layla: Hmm.

Glennon: Was not Carry on Warrior. And it wasn't Love Warrior. My first published book was I wrote an education book. I got together with my friend Amy who taught then with me and we figured out this like program, this way of teaching that would help our kids kind of really kind of beat the test. Um, and it turned into a book, my first book was actually called Test Talk and it was about um helping children who didn't have the language and you know, didn't have the economic privileges that would allow them to have the background knowledge that these tests take, require, um, to be the test. And so, I don't know, I just always understood did it wasn't about helping. There were, there was never my family any kind of, of, of um, idea that what we did was help other people. It was just about like leveling the playing field. Like what you do is you use what you've been given, which now we would call privilege, but back then I had no freaking clue about that word, to kind of get inside systems and um, do what you can do to level the playing field. I feel like that's the ethos of my family.

Layla: Wow. That's, that's an incredible story, and I've watched a number of interviews of yours and listened to a number and that's the first time I ever heard about that book, so--

Glennon: Yeh, nobody talks about Test Talk, Layla. It could be because it's sold maybe six copies, and they were mostly my dad.

Layla: Um, but that's a, that's, that's a it really incredible story. And I'm not surprised to hear that the ancestors who have most influenced you or your parents because I remember reading Love Warrior and your family were such a huge, were and are such a huge part of your life, um, and such a huge influence in the person that you, you have become. Um, and so it's really fascinating to hear about how they're edu--they were educators. Um, and how you yourself now with the, with the work that you are doing, you may not be a teacher anymore in a school, but you're certain, you're certainly, um, teaching a lot of people, a lot of things about, you know, how to live and how to love and how to lead.

Glennon: Thank you. And I think what I love most about my parents is that, and I think these are all my favorite types of people. This is you, this is all the people that I respect the most in this space are, their teachers. But the reason that their teachers is because they're students.

Layla: Right?

Glennon: Like, my parents are, were teachers their whole life, but they are a relentlessly, you know what they have they call beginner's mind. Like, my mom is 65 now and she is just constantly, I think I told you one of our other talks, I came down the stairs at my house. She was visiting a couple of months ago and she literally had out maybe six books and this huge pad of paper where she was trying to understand more about the civil rights era. She had learned it as we all did learn it one way in school and now she's trying to unlearn what she's learned. She's planning trips. She's just such a relentless student.

Layla: Hmm.

Glennon: Um, and first sure, that's what I respect. I think that, you know, more, but more than the teaching is really just the idea that the only teachers I trust are the ones who are, who are never sure--

Layla: Right.

Glennon: Of what they know, but they are just constantly trying to stay open and learn more.

Layla: Right. Right. And you know, um, we talked about, you know, and most people probably have seen your, if they follow you, they've seen your Oprah Winfrey interview. They know how, um, they, they probably know the story of, of Love Warrior, which, uh, at the time when you wrote it was about your marriage, right. And saving your marriage. But by the time you were on Oprah, you were like my marriage is actually over.

Glennon: Yeh, oops!

Layla: Oopsy, daisy. Sorry, Oprah. Um, but--

Glennon: That was an interesting time. Yeh.

Layla: Right. So, um, so first of all, I just want to briefly touch there for people who don't know, are not familiar with that book. And as I said, that's actually, I remember reading it in 2016. It was one of my favorite books, um, because of not, because I could relate in any way to the experiences that you had gone through because we have lived very different lives, have had very different experiences. Um, but within a few pages it had made me cry. And the reason why was because I, it was one of the first times that I can really remember reading a book by a writer who was so committed to telling the truth um, without sort of trying to make it nice or pretty.

Glennon: Mmm, hmm.

Layla: Um, to make it something more presentable. It was just like this is the truth. The ugly or as you say brutal.

Glennon: Yeah. I mean truly that is what I learned in sobriety. I mean, the most important thing to me in the entire world is my sobriety. Um, and so, you know, I don't know if, you know that I started writing sort of based on what I saw and learned in recovery. Um, the first I found out I was pregnant, um, after 15 years of just being so completely lost to alcohol and drug addiction, food addiction too. Um, and I found out I was pregnant one day. It was actually on Mother's Day, I would not have known that then, um, I was on the floor holding a pregnancy test and something just clicked in me and I called my sister and she picked me up off the bathroom floor and took me to my first recovery meeting. And I just sat in that meeting and listened to these people tell their stories. And I just felt like, oh my God, these are the first honest people I have ever met in my life. They were just, you know, they were just, they were telling me, they were saying things, telling stories. I'm talking about family secrets that they just kept, you know, in their hearts and minds just corroding themselves. Um, they talked about relationships they'd hurt and people they'd hurt, and thoughts and feelings that I thought were only my darkest thoughts and feelings. You know?

Layla: Right, right.

Glennon: Then there was something about the telling of it, the sharing of it that you could feel was freeing them. Um, and so I thought, Oh, if I could live this way, maybe I could do it sober. You know, if I didn't feel like I had to pretend and hide all the time and act like everything was fine.

Layla: Mmm.

Glennon: And so at the time Layla, I had three children. I was just dripping with children and this is like fast forward 10 years, I didn't have time to go to meetings anymore. Like I couldn't even get out of my house and that's when I started writing. I thought maybe I could just use the voice that I use in those meetings on the page. Um, and that's how my writing started. I just started doing that every morning.

Layla: Wow. And it's, it's amazing because we never know, first of all, we never know how the darkest place that we're in can end up becoming like the real source of our power.

Glennon: Yes!

Layla: Um, and that always like blows my mind that where we often grow from the most is where we have experienced the most pain.

Glennon: Yeh.

Layla: Um, and I know that you describe, you'd say you talk about how a love warrior's journey is to rush towards her pla-- to pain, toward her pain and to allow that pain to become her power. Um, but it's so counter intuitive.

Glennon: Absolutely. Well and were taught in a million different ways to give your pain. You don't need your pain. That's what all of consumer culture is about. You know?

Layla: Mmm, hmm.

Glennon: Don't feel your pain and you just really, you're not depressed. You just need this new pair of jeans, you know, just like this constant hamster wheel of consuming. So we don't have to feel, um, when actually so much of what we need to become next is inside the pain of now. Right? Like, and also the things about ourselves that we avoid--

Layla: Yeh.

Glennon: Or like I, you know, I've still, I've deal with so much, so much to mental health challenges and always will and always have. I mean, I think that's, I thought my problem was that I was over drinker and an overeater, but really my problem was that I was depressed and anxious and I was self medicating. Right?

Layla: Right.

Glennon: So, but listen, this depression, the sensitivity thing, like I've just always been an incredibly sensitive person. I think you are too. Right?

Layla: Yeah. Like,

Glennon: Yeah.

Layla: Like I'm turned inside out.

Glennon: Yes. That's exactly right. That's exactly right. But listen, that sensitivity that led me to addiction, in the first part of my life is the exact same sensitivity that makes me a good artist now.

Layla: Mmm, and can I, I just want to like press on this point because what I'm hearing you say is the thing about the things about ourselves that we are judging, that we are abandoning, that we are, um, feeling shame around. We don't have to um get rid of them in order to become whatever that thing that we think we should become a better person, a perfect person, whatever that, that more whole, that, that thing that we're actually running away from trying to change about ourselves, it's--

Glennon: Yeah.

Layla: Not about abandoning it.

Glennon: Mmm, hmm. Yes.

Layla: It's about seeing how, and I think this is, you know, because we live in a, in a world and in a culture that is, you know, white supremacists, capitalist, patriarchal, there are so many, um, uh, characteristics and kind of things that we're like, well, that's not valuable in this kind of a society.

Glennon: Mmm, hmm. Well, and think about feelings, any sort of feelings.

Layla: Mmm, hmm.

Glennon: Like a lot of true feelings are very inconvenient to our culture, right?

Layla: Right.

Glennon: I mean, why, why is women's anger so unbelievably suppressed and oppressed and, and, and shamed? And, you know, I can't, I can't tell you, I'm sure for you too, how many women come to me and say, I'm so angry. What's wrong with me?

Layla: Hmm.

Glennon: And I always say, listen, there's only two types of women that I respect right now. One, women who are angry and two, women who are in an active coma, like you should be angry. Right? This is like the reason why we are told not to be angry is because angry women tend to demand change.

Layla: Right.

Glennon: So of course that we, we would be trained to when we feel angry, to think that there's something wrong with us instead of thinking that's a signal that there's something wrong.

Layla: Right. Right. And, and do you know, when I began, when I started my kind of journey as a, well, first as a coach and then later as a writer and I'm, have been immersed in the personal growth, the spiritual, the wellness field, that, that community, these feelings that we're talking about anchor, um, uh, pain, you know, like sitting in the pain, being in the anger and not making it wrong was something I saw all around me being really judged as bad, being judged, things that we need to overcome, that we need to get past, that we need to not indulge in. Um, but I have seen certainly in the work that I'm doing that we can't do this work without those things.

Glennon: Right. It's like fuel, right? I mean, I certainly feel that there is a, a way we can, I think when anger becomes completely inactive--

Layla: Right.

Glennon: And just stays in anger, then that just becomes another hiding place.

Layla: Right.

Glennon: I mean, I've seen that happen. I've been, I've done that.

Layla: I have too.

Glennon: Yeh, absolutely. It becomes very comfy.

Layla: Well, I almost lost myself.

Glennon: Mmm, hmm.

Layla: You know, because there's, I mean there's the, on one end of the spectrum, there's the like hyper positive, positive vibes, only, only love and light, right? And that, that's toxic. But it's also the nonstop anger where we don't give ourselves space for anything else except to be angry is, um, it just for me is not a reflection of our whole humanity because we have access to all the feelings. Um, but now the, you know, for, if we're going to be truth tellers, we also have to understand that depending on our positionality and our privilege, we might just be, we might just be in a constant state of anger because of racism, because of homophobia, because of whatever marginalized identities that you hold. That we're in a society where you're, that thing is still is constantly being stoked. You can't decide, I don't want to experience racism today.

Glennon: That's right. That's right.

Layla: And so I think it's so important to have empathy for when we're seeing people who are in anger, for us not to say, well that's not very healthy for them to always be angry.

Glennon: Absolutely. Absolutely. Yeah. I hear that.

Layla: Cause we don't know--

Glennon: The idea that people of privilege, you know, when, when the anger is burning me up too much, I can just decide that I need a break from it.

Layla: Right.

Glennon: And that is certainly a privilege.

Layla: Glennon when you started your writing career, you were, um, and I don't know if you kind of self named yourself to this or this was a title you were given, but you were kind of under the title of Christian Mommy Blogger.

Glennon: Okay. Layla, let me just say something about that.

Layla: Please do. Because I've been so curious me.

Glennon: God help me. It will be on my frickin tombstone. Okay. Nobody, nobody called me Christian Mommy blogger until I announced that I was marrying Abby. This is when this started. Okay.

Layla: Wow.

Glennon: Somebody. Somebody put on some news, newspaper, the first newspaper or the whatever Internet paper that put out the story put out Abby Wambach dating or marrying Christian Mommy Blogger. Okay. And I was like, what the?

Layla: Wow, yeah.

Glennon: The reason why they did that is because that was the most shocking thing you could put with Abby Wambach.

Layla: Mmm, hmm.

Glennon: Right. Like that would, that was clickbait because, oh, a Christian mommy is marrying a woman. Like, so that was picked up by everyone else on earth and forever more, I will be named Glennon Doyle Christian Mommy Blogger, which is so insulting in so many ways because you know, like my friend Rachel said, if

you have a uterus and you're a writer, they will call you a blogger, like a mommy blogger.

Layla: Right.

Glennon: Um, so yeah, it's a family joke. Everyone in my family calls me Christian Mommy Blogger now it will never end.

Layla: Well, that last part made me laugh. But also I feel very strongly about, um, uh, each of us as human beings having the right to name ourselves. And that is not a name that you have given yourself?

Glennon: No. No. So no, all the people asking to have a sweatshirt made that said, says Christian Mommy Bloggers Wife--

Layla: Okay. But okay, so you, but you started your career. Um, not talking about race oppression, social justice, um, you, um, were having hard conversations for sure. Truthful conversations for sure. And then at some point something happened. What happened?

Glennon: Yeah. So, um, I would say that, you know, together rising started a few years after I started my blog and, um, you know, together rising kind of felt like my work in the schools. It was just like our mission was to go into um systems and, um, tell the right stories and, um, divert funds from people that needed it and rock the boat, you know, on the ground. Right. And that's the way that I was taught to do. It wasn't activist, it wasn't anything. It was the way you do life. Right. Um, and then well we weren't out there at marches anyway, I was sitting with my, one of my, both of my daughters one day on the couch and I was showing them pictures of, of, um, of a civil rights march. And my youngest daughter pointed to a white woman in the march. Um, they're, they're half Asian, but they're both of them look, both my daughters look white, my son does not. Um, so my youngest daughter pointed to a white woman and said, um, mommy, look, would we have been marching with them? And I almost said, yeah. Like my reaction was to say, absolutely, we would have. Then my older daughter Tish kind of interrupted my sentence and said, no, Emma, we wouldn't have been marching with them, then. I mean, we're not marching with them now.

Layla: Hmm.

Glennon: Um, which, and you know, they just went on with their business. Um, but it really was a moment for me, you know, I would call it a sobering moment because I think of everything in terms of recovery. Um, which is a moment in which you realize that you might not actually be the kind of person that you imagined yourself to be.

Layla: Right.

Glennon: Right. And I think we have sobering moments, you know, most of us who had been living lives of privilege in this country are having sobering moments about our country. You know, like, oh, our country is not what we imagined it to be.

Layla: Hmm. Because when you, like you said, you almost said yes.

Glennon: Yeh.

Layla: So, that says to me before your daughter said no, and this is why, that your self image was, for want of a better word were I'm one of the good whites.

Glennon: I'm a good white person, I would have been there.

Layla: Mmm, hmm.

Glennon: So, so then this is, you know, sent me into a, you know, what I do when I have these sobering moments is just start reading. That's what I do. I'm trying to unlearn whatever it was that made me have the wrong idea. Um, and, uh, start to try to relearn. And, and I do remember laying in my bed and reading one night, um, uh, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's letters from the Birmingham jail. And I remember reading the greatest stumbling block to freedom is not the Ku Klux Klanner, it's the white moderate who is more committed to order than to justice.

Layla: Hmm.

Glennon: And, um, and so that is when there were, there was like some language to go with this moment that I had just had with my daughters, um, that this thing that I was, had a name, this was not a new invention. This sort of white person in America who feels that they are good and, um, so imagines themselves to be on this side of civil rights without doing a thing about it. Um, so yeah, that was kind of a turning, uh, turning point for me.

Layla: And so I, you know, have a, a platform and a community that is uh very white, because a lot of people are coming into my work, uh, through the Me and White Supremacy uh work that I'm doing. Many people are having that turning point moment that you've just described. Um, but many of them are not Glennon Doyle with a huge platform.

Glennon: Mmm, hmm.

Layla: Right? So they're having their moment privately, um, the way that they're processing Me and White Supremacy or whatever, whatever things that they're starting to learn, they're getting to process it in the privacy of their own homes and the privacy of their own community. You are not.

Glennon: Mmm, hmm.

Layla: Right.

Glennon: Yeh.

Layla: Right. So there's, there's a, there's a difference. And so the reason why I wanted to talk about this is when I first started, very first time that I wrote or spoke publicly about, um, white supremacy was in a viral letter that I wrote called I Need to Talk to Spiritual White Women About White Supremacy. And it was a, an open letter that was specifically directed towards, um, what would, I would call a spiritual white woman leaders. So, um, why women leaders who had platform, whose work was about healing or transforming coaching, um, wellness and generally, you know, changing people's lives and changing the world and they would fall under that category of the white moderate that you were talking about from Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Letter. Um, and so, you know, I wasn't talking to the KKK, I was talking to, um, a white liberal, progressive white people who would definitely not class themselves as racist, um, who would definitely probably call themselves allies, um, and who saw themselves as being on, if we're looking at it in a binary way, even though it's not binary, but who would count themselves as being on the good side as opposed to being on the bad side. Right?

Glennon: Yes.

Layla: And what I wanted to do in that letter is to create accountability or to highlight the fact that as someone with privilege and a platform, you are seeing what is happening. But you're not saying anything. You're not doing anything.

Glennon: Yeah.

Layla: Um, you have, you have taken it upon yourself and seen it as your responsibility, not just to have this awakening and have this conversation in your families, but to also bring it into your platform.

Glennon: Yes.

Layla: Um, which first of all, I want to say, well, first of all, I want to ask what has that been like for you? And then secondly, and then secondly, I want to ask, what has it been? How, let me re ask, how are you navigating when you get it wrong?

Glennon: Mmm. Yeah. Okay. Um, so I guess what I would say first of all is that I actually did do a whole lot of processing. Might not, mean it doesn't seem like it, but I actually did do a whole lot of priv-- and do, do a whole lot of private processing.

Layla: Mmm, hmm.

Glennon: Because I was so freaking confused in the beginning. And I'm still very confused. But, um, I think we talked about this a little bit before Layla on an earlier call,

but to me it really did feel like, sort of like when I got sober, um, just kind of waking up to a reality that I had been completely and sort of, and deliberately unaware of. Right. Um, and I feel like, and I see in the other women, white women who are, um, bringing themselves to this experience who are sort of determined to, to wake up, to become racially sober in this country. Um, there's, there's a distinctive pattern to it. You know, um, at first, you know, you start to read, you start to follow Black women, you start to follow the Latina woman, you start to follow Indigenous women, you start to see things completely differently from your little perspective. Um, and then you start to have feelings and thoughts. And, um, I think because white women, because I have been so used to having my feelings and thoughts centered in situations in most situations, um, we feel entitled to share them.

Layla: Yes, sorry, yes.

Glennon: Notice that Layla?

Layla: (Laughing) I don't know what you could be talking about!

Glennon: (Laughing) Right? No, maybe some day you'll notice it Layla. Um, so, and, and so that's so, okay. So if you've done enough like reading and concentrating and paying attention, then you know that those spaces you're going to, to share those feelings are actually on many levels not for that. But in of course, the most basic levels is that you, Layla, are not even, this is not, you are finding a lane here to speak to white women because your intention and goal is to make things better and safer for Black people and people of color. And, and so, so it's not even really, it's not for our feelings.

Layla: Right.

Glennon: Right. We're just learning. Um, and so what I have noticed when you say how do I respond when I get it wrong is, um, I think what happens is that white women think sometimes that what this work is about is knowing how to say the right thing.

Layla: Yes.

Glennon: Um, and so what happens is that, okay, so if I'm holding a mug of tea and I, and my mug gets bumped then tea comes out, right?

Layla: Right.

Glennon: If I'm holding a mug of coffee then, and I get bumped then coffee comes out, um, if, if I'm out saying something doing the work and I get bumped, which I will and I haven't done the work to become something different on the inside.

Layla: Yeah.

Glennon: Then what will spill out of me is the person who hasn't done the work underneath, um, which is what you see when, um, when a white person like me comes out and says the things and then somebody else, a woman of color comes back and says, that's not it.

Layla: Mmm, hmm.

Glennon: And then the white woman has gotten bumped. What comes out is I'm trying, don't attack me. You know, all of the things that would not come out, would not spill out, had there been enough underground work done before speaking out.

Layla: Right.

Glennon: Am I saying that in the right way? It's like, it's like we're trying to say the right thing before we'd done the work to become the right thing.

Layla: Right.

Glennon: Because if I get bumped, listen Layla, I have, I mean I have all of the feelings, I have so many feelings. Um, but I do know enough to know that those feelings are not, um, relevant to the situation I've just entered into.

Layla: Hmm.

Glennon: Right. So like those feelings maybe should be shared with my dog and not humans and the interwebs. Right. So, um, I would say that I think that it's that, anybody, any white people that I've seen, um, that I respect in this area are probably doing like 95% of all of their work silently by listening.

Layla: Mmm, hmm.

Glennon: By learning. And then there's like this 5%, that's like a outward thing, right. And then that 5% is usually because it's been requested.

Layla: Mmm, hmm.

Glennon: if that makes sense. Like it's usually because they've been invited into a space to speak, not because, um, they're constantly volunteering themselves. Like it's like somebody said, fine, I see you as an ally come in here and say something as opposed to like, here I am, I'm an ally. I'm saying all the things!

Layla: Right. And, and this, you know, something that I talk about often is, um, the difference between showing up as an ally and showing up as a white savior.

Glennon: Mmm, hmm. Yes.

Layla: And as someone who, when you hold privilege, um, and you haven't done the work so you don't understand that the way that you're viewing uh Black, indigenous and people of color as is, as being beneath you is as being kind of like they don't, they're, that we're not capable. We don't have the same level of intelligence capability. Then you rush in as the savior to do the thing that you think that you were supposed to be doing. Cause it makes sense based on your understanding, right. Until you've dug deeper to do the work. And I think what you're saying is so important for people who are white, who hold white privilege, who are listening in to understand that first of all, the work, most of the work is internal.

Glennon: Yes.

Layla: Because if you move from a space of doing work out in the world, but you haven't done the inner work, absolutely, as you've just said, what comes out is all of those things that you've been trying to hide.

Glennon: Yeah. Yes.

Layla: Right?

Glennon: Yes, that's exactly right. And Layla, I think that's what I really do believe-- like when I see that stuff play out. That's why people get so upset about it because, well, what I see is not the people really get upset that you said the wrong thing. It's always the, what happens next.

Layla: Yeh.

Glennon: Okay. It's like you said the wrong thing or you said something that's off or you said something that just reveals that you haven't done enough work yet or whatever it is, and then it's the bump afterwards. Right? So you get challenged on it. And then what spills out is um this, this, this sense of like, well, you should be grateful for what I've just done.

Layla: Right.

Glennon: Why are you hurting my feelings. And that's the part that makes people upset. Not because they're being, it's not even because they're being emotional. It's because of that is proof that the underground work wasn't done first

Layla: Right.

Glennon: Because had the underground work done, the response to the bump would have been different.

Layla: Right. And as the work continues, as you continue to do the work, right. Because this is lifelong work. Um, you also don't reach a point of never reacting. No

reach a point of, tah dah, no, I am the perfect white ally. Have it all together. I've made it. And you know, I, I made this very clear to you when I invited you onto the podcast and with our, with our other white guests who's preceded this conversation as well. You know, I said, I'm not inviting you on because I see you as an exceptional white person who has somehow surpassed other white people in this work. That's not a belief I hold and I make it very clear and I want it to be very clear that that's not the reason why I'm inviting who I invite on. Um, but I do invite on people who I see in the work, in the awkwardness of the work and who I hope when they come on, we'll be able to have truthful and honest conversations about what the realities of it. Um, you talk about in your, in, in Love Warrior, um, you realize that each one of us was going out into the world, that you are going out into the world with this representative of yourself, not your real self, but this perf-- perfect version that you felt like that's the, that's the version of me that is acceptable out in the world and it's, and it's a mask. And so, you know, we're talking about good ancestorship, right? And we're talking about creating a world that is different. Those masks need to go.

Glennon:

That's right. Well, and it's so God, it's so scary and um, necessary. You know. Um, I'd say one of the stories that I think is so interesting that my dad told me is that he, he lives in a, in a heavily segregated fishing town in rural Virginia. And um, they, a few months ago there, there was some, no, actually it's a couple years ago there was a call to the community from a church to, for the, for the white people in that area to come together to start talking about this stuff. Okay. I don't know what the exact invitation was and my parents were like, okay, we're going to talk. And so they went to this meeting and, and, and so, and the woman stood up and she just started talking about outreach. Okay. She just kept using the word outreach. The woman who was leading the meeting and she said what they were going to do actually was to create care packages, all of these white people, to send to the Black school in the area. That was the answer to the, their answer. And my dad, which I, he stood up and bless his heart, I've never heard him talk like this until he told me the story, but he stood up and he said, I'm not here to make care packages. I was raised in a very racist town and I have all of these thoughts and feelings about Black people and I know now that they're not true and I also know that they're really dangerous and I don't know how to get them out of me and I want them out of me and I just need to talk about that. And Jesus. I just felt like that if, if, if a lot of, if, if white people will be honest, I feel like they might say stuff like that. You know, that's a scary thing to say, but it's can be true on some levels. You know, people like when I was a teacher I learned that people can't understand a new concept. Like, unless, it's attached to an other, another concept, right? That's how I learn. Like you learn, you can only learn if you're linking it to something else. You know like background knowledge is so important. And you know, when I talked to women about the misogyny in the air and how, you know, women with eating disorders and how all of this, these messages that we've been pumped about, two about women are in the air. They're programmed into us and we have to deprogram ourselves. Nobody says to me, well, I can't admit I hold those feelings because I'm a good person.

Layla: Right.

Glennon: But we see, but that's how we feel about racism. Like this stuff is pumped into the air of our culture and our systems. But we say, well, I can't admit I am affected by it because I'm a good person. It doesn't make any sense.

Layla: Right.

Glennon: It has nothing to do with being good or bad. Um, it has to do with living in a culture where this poison is pumped through us from the moment we're born.

Layla: Mmm, hmm.

Glennon: Just like the misogyny. And you're like, why can't we admit that they're or think of them in similar ways. So, um, so yeah, I don't know. I just feel like, you know, when you talk about representatives, it's so much, isn't it tidy to like walk into a place and be like, oh, we're just here to help. We'll make care packages.

Layla: Right.

Glennon: What the hell?

Layla: Right.

Glennon: Um, and, and Layla and that conversation ended there, like not a single person in that room when my dad was, it was just dead silence.

Layla: Hmm.

Glennon: And then they carried on with the care packages.

Layla: Which tells you that it was about self serv--, serving the self and, and, and alleviating that, um, feeling of guilt and shame. Um, it wasn't about Black, indigenous, people of color.

Glennon: Of course not. No. Check the box. Go home and be done with it.

Layla: Right.

Glennon: Don't go deep. Don't go deep.

Layla: Glennon, I know you've been, um, working through the Me and White Supremacy Workbook.

Glennon: Yes.

Layla: And I'm really curious to hear about how that experience has been for you. What's been coming up for you in what you've been learning about yourself?

Glennon: Well, I think I, totally, I'll submit this story. Um, so, well, first of all, I just feel, I mean, you know, that I have, I don't know if there's a better, when women, you know, when white women come to me, they say, where do I start? Um, and I just always point them directly to you because I believe that that workbook for me, I don't know, it's something about, first of all, the way that you synthesize information, but it's also the, the, the questions that you ask in the journaling. Like there are places where I've seen a lot of that information but never the way that you present it and never with the journaling. So I think I told you that I started the workbook and read what you wrote about. Um, don't that it's very important to do the journaling parts, right? But Layla, I'm a writer. I write all day. I was like, you know what, I bet I can do this without the journaling. So I started and then got to page, whatever it's on really early on three or four. And there was this direct a paragraph that you wrote that was like, and there will be some of you who will think, I don't have to do the journaling, I'm special. I know blah, blah, blah. Do the journaling. So then I thought, oh my God, Layla is on my shoulder, so I well, and thank God because the journaling is where, uh it's all the deep stuff. It's where this stuff comes up that you don't necessarily want to think about. Um, you know, it's so easy for this to turn into doing the right thing, saying the right thing. Um, and, and I, and it's, it's tempting for me to think of it in terms of learning. Right?

Layla: Right.

Glennon: Which is also a very outward thing. It's outward.

Layla: It's like to think of it as self development, personal development.

Glennon: Yes. Yeah. I'll just read this. I'll just, I'll listen to Layla's podcast. I'll do, I do you know, all of that when, when I think what your work does for me is make me realize that it's also, it's about excavation. You know, it's not just, it's not just input. It's going deep inside and pulling out what's there. And looking at it, which actually reminds me a lot of recovery too, but I will drop that back. Um, so I think that's what your work does for me. It's somehow from the outside, like turns in your work from the outside turns into what is actually like an archeological dig inside. Um, which, by the way, Layla, I really believe is the only way, way towards growth in any area.

Layla: Right.

Glennon: I mean, that's what, that's what AA did for me, right? It was like, oh no, no, no, we're not moving forward. We're not moving forward until we get that, are out. Until we get that out from this like dark place on the inside and pull it out where we can look at it in the light. That's how we move forward. And the other thing

about your, I don't know how this works with your work, but in some other work I'm allowed, I'm, I'm more able to stay in my head.

Layla: Hmm.

Glennon: Whereas whatever's going on with that journal is helping me get into what I, what I'm not even conscious off. Does that make sense? It's like, whereas most of this stuff is, um, I can tell you all the things in my brain, like, I know why all of this makes sense, but that's not where we need to get to. Actually where we need to get to is the subconscious. Um, and so I think that is what's happening with all of the thousands of women doing this. um doing Me and White Supremacy is that it's, um, it's not just teaching, it's excavating them.

Layla: Thank you for, for saying all of that because I know we have, um, surpassed 70,000 downloads of the workbook.

Glennon: God, that's wild.

Layla: Yes, it's, it's really, it's really wild. And I don't know that 70,000 people are actually doing the work.

Glennon: Mmm, hmm.

Layla: And I can tell who has and who hasn't from when they've downloaded and, and the way that they talk to me.

Glennon: Mmm.

Layla: I can tell instantly who's downloaded the workbook and either maybe just read through it or maybe just did a couple of journaling days or maybe it's still kind of somewhere in their download folder versus someone who, um, has the discipline and the commitment to really be honest and truthful with themselves and work through it step by step by step. Right. You can tell the difference.

Glennon: Mmm, hmm.

Layla: Um, because, and, and I mean, I can tell the difference. I don't know if you have white privilege that you can tell the difference, but I can tell the difference for sure because there's so much more awareness and, and um, kind of a more conscious way of being in the space of being, in conversation of approaching, you know, I received an email today from somebody they started off with, thank you for your workbook. I just completed it. But then the rest of the email tells me they didn't. Because--

Glennon: Tell me some of the-- how do you know? Tell me some of the ways--

Layla: So I know because they come out of the gate starting to, with centering themselves, they want me to know about all the things that they are doing. So they're, so they are not focused on that this work actually isn't about me. Um, the entire email was about them. The entire email was, there was also a lot of what I call white exceptionalism.

Glennon: Why they're the one, okay.

Layla: Right. So all of this work that they're doing out in the world and um, how it's about other white people and not them, but they don't, it's not framed in that way. But as I'm reading through it, I can, I can see it. Um, and there's also a way of being too, what's the word? It feels like being too familiar.

Glennon: Yep.

Layla: Um, and that's an energy that you can feel, and it tells me why that's an issue is it tells me that they don't understand the privilege dynamic, the privilege power dynamic between them as a white person in me as a Black person.

Glennon: Mmm, hmm.

Layla: So they're talking to me as if me and the-- me and they are on at, sorry. They and I are on the same level playing field.

Glennon: Mmm, hmm.

Layla: And so there's just so many signs like that, you know, I can tell by the way someone is taking up space, I can tell by the way that they are making themselves the exception or making other people, other white people, it's not about me. I can tell by the way, it's all about, um, themselves, their family, their work and not about who this work is actually for.

Glennon: Yeah.

Layla: Yeah.

Glennon: And it's amazing that you say even like taking up the space in the room because like when you say that, that makes me just think of this idea of you can see if the coffee or the tea has changed. Like you, it's not even always about saying what's said.

Layla: Right.

Glennon: It's just like the beingness of people. Like--

Layla: Yes.

Glennon: It's like, it's like you can't do all of this, or maybe you can, I don't know. I, I'm not sure how you do all of this and unlearn all of this and listen and to not just walk around with a very deep humility.

Layla: Thank you. Yes, exactly. And we're not talking about shame--

Glennon: No.

Layla: And we're not talking about, uh, um, what's the word? Like we're not talking about dimming your light or making yourself small or you know, none of that. But there is, if you are letting this work really hit you and go within you, then you can't but not have a deep sense of humility.

Glennon: Yeah. And it's, and, and I think some people like you can't fake that humility either because when you're faking that humility, it comes out as like self flagellation or shame.

Layla: Right.

Glennon: Which is just another way to take up more space.

Layla: Thank you. Yes. Exactly. Yeah.

Glennon: That is so centering, right? Cause it's like, I feel bad. Make me feel better about this. That's not what, that's not at all. That's the opposite of what we're talking about. It's just like this, it's a beingness. It's a deep humility that just, I dunno.

Layla: Um, Glennon, what I find really, I guess, grounding about you is that no matter what you're talking about, you bring the principles that guide you, um, back to your journey with sobriety.

Glennon: Mmm, hmm.

Layla: So sobriety and that journey saved your life essentially. Right? Um, but you bring it, you, you managed to bring it into any conversation we're having. Right.

Glennon: Right.

Layla: And the reason why I like that is, you know who you are in one situation is who you are in every situation, and it feels like to me that because you have this guiding principle, these guiding principles about how you're going to show up, no matter what the situation is, that you have like a, um, you always have a way to come home back to yourself.

Glennon: Mmm. Mmm, hmm.

Layla: No matter what, no matter what has been presented to you. No matter what experience you're going through, no matter what's showing up in your family life, no matter what's showing up in your, in your career, right. That there's a way that you're able to come back to yourself.

Glennon: Thank you for that. It does feel like that. It feels like what saved my life. And I mean that very literally. I mean, when I found out I was pregnant, I was definitely didn't have long to go. I was so, so sick, Layla.

Layla: Hmm.

Glennon: And, and what saved my life was a commitment to no more shame and no more secrets. Um, and then what I learned in those basements, which is just, you know, and the reason it applies to this, it's what I learned in those basements was like you, if you're keeping a secret and they're always like family secrets, you know that if you're keeping a secret, it will corrode you. It will, it will be the thing that you, that keeps you from doing all of the other things you were meant to do. It will affect you on every level. It will cellularly just change you and change your life and change all of your relationships, these secrets. And so we speak them. But the other thing that I love that is amazing about recovery is, you know, it's like an ideal family. So everybody talks about family, family. But actually most people can't even be real with their real families. Every time somebody says to me, I want to be real, but I can't even be real with my family. I'm like, look, family is the final frontier. Alright?

Layla: Yes, we can be real as we want to like hundreds and thousands of people out on the Internet, but not with our family.

Glennon: No Way. I turn into a 12 year old, like I'm like shoving cereal down my mouth again. Like it's just, it's like that's where our roles are most firmly entrenched.

Layla: Yeah, right?

Glennon: And being real is, is not playing a role because when we're playing a role, we're not bringing our whole selves to the table. Right. And so families kind of, that's how they're, they're little microcosm. They, that's how they survive is that everybody doesn't bring their full selves to the table.

Layla: Right.

Glennon: So in recovery is where I found this ideal family, right? Yeah. An ideal family being where you actually are able to bring your full self to the table knowing that whatever you bring you will remain seen, valued and protected. Right. And then the other half of that is this amazing thing that happens in recovery, which is that there are rules about how to listen to other people bringing their full selves to the table. Okay. I think that one of the reasons we have so much

trouble being honest, you know, bringing our pain to each other, it's not because we're wimps is because people suck at listening.

Layla: Yes.

Glennon: You see this constantly in ways that are so damaging. But it's, it's incessant. It's everywhere. You know, people bring their pain and we just do not know how to handle other people's pain. We just, we have to dismiss it or we have to compare it to ourselves or we have to explain it away or we have to rationalize it or we have to not believe it or you know, but in recovery there are actual strict rules about how to listen. Right? Like when somebody brings their selves and puts their heart out there, puts their pain out there, puts their dreams out there. Whatever it is. There's no crosstalk. There's no dismissal. There's no-- so it's the structure that liberates people to bring their full selves so they can finally breathe and be seen for the first time. So that is the model that I created right. I mean I am going to use, I am going to bring my full self to here and then a decade in those, in those comment sections, in all of that of trying to get people to understand that you can feel whatever way you want to feel about this and still respond or not respond in ways that make that person feel seen, valued and protected.

Layla: Yeh.

Glennon: Um, and so that those, just those basic, no, to me that's it, it's like what are we trying to do? We're trying to create an ideal family. What does that mean? It means I get to bring my full self to the table. You get to bring your full self to the table and at the end of the day we can all trust that we are going to be seen and valued and protected. Which is why of course there's an, I mean I can't not think about the race conversations that people are trying to have without thinking about recovery and our inability, first of all, our inability to face huge family secrets. Right? Which aren't even secrets. They're out in the open. I mean, I don't know what to call them!

Layla: But yes, you're, it's like the secret that everyone knows, right.

Glennon: It's corroding us--

Layla: Right.

Glennon: Our souls and our, and some people's bodies and all of our souls and our, you know, it's like, can we just take an honest moral inventory of our country and talk about the foundations that we're purported to be built upon, upon how we were actually built. And then of course that deep, dark, horrible family secret isn't going to cause unbelievable trauma. Right. And then like can we allow people, all people to bring themselves fully to our table and listen to, the personal experiences of people of color, of, of, of, of trans people, of queer people, of all the people in our country who've been oppressed. And can we

allow them to bring themselves to the table? Can we listen? Right, without cross talk, without dismissal, without comparing, without all of these things that we use. And then if we can do that, we get to this place where the only way forward is true apology and full amends.

Layla: Hmm.

Glennon: Right? Like there are amends to be made that are real, that are tangible, that are, and it's like, I, I can just see this, there's a way forward. Like this is the way that lives heal, this is the way that families heal. This is the way that a nation can heal, but it's never going to happen if we just try to skip over everything, right? If we just say, okay, actually yeah, that happened, but you know what, let's just get on with it.

Layla: And can I say as well, just to, sorry to cut you off there because, um, you know, we, we were talking about sobriety and I remember in your, in your book Love Warrior, you know, how difficult it was for your family, um, when you were, uh, struggling with alcohol addiction. Um, how difficult it was for them to see you do the things that you were doing and the way that it was harming them. Um, and the reason I bring this up is because in your recovery, I am sure that you had to apologize. You had to make amends. You couldn't just say, well, that was what I did when I was an alcoholic, but now I'm sober so we can just move-- we don't, we don't need to talk about any of that. We can just skip onto the nice part. Now.

Glennon: Gorgeous. That is so true. Of course. And, and you don't have to be an alcoholic to relate to that. I mean--

Layla: Right.

Glennon: How many people have ever gotten-- you truly hurt someone hurt their partner, hurt their child hurt their, as we do and then gone to them and said, you know what, that was like three days ago. Let's just move on. Love and light, you know, like, that will never work. Like we can't, it doesn't work in our personal relationships. So why on earth would it work on a wider, you know, within a wider relationship. Right.

Layla: Mmm, hmm. Mmm, hmm. But I really, I really love when you, when you started, you said, I started with a commitment to no shame and no secrets. Yeah. Um, because what I, what I am finding as I'm exploring what does it mean to be a good ancestor? I'm finding for myself that it's really important, and this is, you know, with the, with the guidance of my mentor as well, it's really important for me to have a written manifest-- manifesto. Like written guidelines, rules, principles for how I'm going to live my life. That I cannot just leave it to chance, um, that I can, that, that I have to have something, um, solid a place within me where I know who I am so that no matter what the circumstances, I show up the same way. And I've seen, I've, I've seen different interviews with you and I've

talked to you when we're not in an interview. Right? And it appears to me you just show up the same way every time.

Glennon: Yes.

Layla: And so the reason that I think this is important, first of all, anyone who's, who's in this work of exploring for themselves, what does it mean to be a good ancestor? I just think it's really important to have like simple but really powerful rules for how I'm going to show up in the world.

Glennon: Mmm, hmm.

Layla: Um.

Glennon: And then don't let the world change them.

Layla: Yes.

Glennon: Listen, Layla, I, this was tested for me big time when I decided to leave my husband and marry Abby six weeks before my marriage redemption book was about to hit the country, right? I literally had to have meetings with all of the people who were involved in the success of this book, people's careers. We're dependent upon it and tell them that I was leaving and, and, and it wasn't, and they begged me not to tell until after. It was like an unbelievable debacle. But this is when you have your list, when you know, and these are basic, basic things. These are not--

Layla: Really basic, really like.

Glennon: Yes, I don't have a business plan to save my life.

Layla: Right.

Glennon: I just know that I can't keep secrets. Like they made me really, really sick. And like if, if revealing a secret, um, and we all, we all have to navigate the difference between privacy and secrets. I mean, I have a family like I, I know I have to navigate that, but I also think we all know the difference when it comes down to it. A secret is about who you are, you know, like hiding something about who you are, like who God made you to be. Um, but I knew like if, if this secret, if this thing is supposed to take my career out, then okay, then that just means that this is this my career wasn't supposed to go this way. You know. So, and I also knew that what I had been working so hard to create in this community was an ideal family, not a fake family.

Layla: Hmm.

Glennon: Meaning I could bring this part of myself to this community and whether or not they got it or understood that was not the point. That's never the point. The point is, the only rule is that you bring your whole self to the table. And then the other rule is no matter how I feel about that, you are seen and valued and protected.

Layla: Yeah.

Glennon: And that's what happened. The, the, the, my community, you know, I remember my friend saying to me after I announced it and the response was so beautiful. I remember a friend saying, you know what? It's like you've been creating this community for 10 years that you would one day need to fall into.

Layla: Mmm. Mmm, hmm.

Glennon: That's how it works. Right.

Layla: And it's so funny because I had not been familiar with you prior to seeing you on Oprah and hearing about your book club where I had not been familiar with your work until that point. So I didn't know about what you had been writing about, who you were, what you were about. But I just remember watching that Oprah interview and just having an immediate sense of respect, um, for somebody who is very clear in how she is, she's going to live her life, even if it means coming on Oprah and saying the thing.

Glennon: Oh yeah. And Oprah was the one who, I mean, she was a warrior for the truth. She was, it was the, it was the National Christian Women Tour that I was on at the moment that had some big feelings.

Layla: The Christian Mommy Blogger tour.

Glennon: Yeh, full circle. Excellent. Right.

Layla: But in, but in the face of absolutely. Uh, just everyone, right. Uh, saying this is not a good idea. You are going to lose things. Big things, money, relationships, all kinds of things, but you were clear in what my mentor says to me, "I define myself for myself." And I do-- I only center my definition of myself. I do not center other people's perception of how I'm supposed to be in the world.

Glennon: That's exactly right and just like we are always changing if we're doing it right, all of the outsides of us will change too. But, the the things, If I have discovered something that is true, whether it's okay, I'm not the person that I, that I was, I'm a white moderate, and then you know whether, so now I'm going to start speaking about that. Whether it's okay, I'm in love with a woman now this is, this is my truth. Whatever I lose because I've stepped into that place I was meant to lose.

Layla: Mmm.

Glennon: That's like the pruning of the, like if we have anything because of a fake version of ourselves, we don't really have that thing. Right. That's why people live in fear so much because they have to keep acting to keep this thing that is only there because of the act.

Layla: Yeah.

Glennon: Right. So let me continue to figure out what's next for me and whatever I have to lose to step into that next version of myself then let me lose it so I can travel light.

Layla: I felt light, just as you said that. I'm definitely someone who is continuously in my work, like you said, a lifelong student, continuously stripping back layers, finding new parts of myself and I find that, um, the more I strip away the layers of, uh, like needing to perform for other people. So needing to be this like perfect leader, this like has it all together, knows all the answers, doesn't struggle with her own self doubt or whatever that is. Right.

Glennon: Mmm, hmm.

Layla: The more I strip away those layers, like it feels more raw, but it then feels lighter because then I'm not having to remember, you got to play this role. Right.

Glennon: Don't forget.

Layla: Right.

Glennon: Yeah. Then you can, you lose it. Then you get to just show up for yourself-- as who you are all the time. Because because what you've built is based on, I will be who I am in any given moment and that is literally all I can promise you.

Layla: Right. And isn't that, that's, that's like, that just made me smile. A big smile. That last part, that's all I can promise you. That's it. Nothing more.

Glennon: Nothing. That is it Layla. But that's everything. The reason why that's everything is because, especially for people who like, we talk about who have a platform or whatever we want to call that, it's because that's all other people want to do.

Layla: Mmm, hmm.

Glennon: So we think they want this like shiny version of ourselves. But, that's not what they want. They want freedom to show up wherever they are, however they are. And so when they see another woman doing that, they're like, ah, that, that looks like living with less fear.

Layla: Right. Beautiful. Uh, Glennon this conversation has been all kinds of wonderful. Um, I've really enjoyed it and you've really given me some nuggets that are going to stick with me, especially that last part. I have to write that down because that's really gonna stick with me. Um, where can people find you and get like, what are your books so that they can purchase them? Just remind us of that.

Glennon: Okay. Well, everyone probably wants Test Talk. I'm just joking. It's super good you guys! It's super good. Okay. Uh, the Love uh of, Carry on Warrior was my first memoir. Love Warrior was my last memoir. Um, and let's see, I am just on Twitter, on Instagram @GlennonDoyle and all the other places, Facebook and Twitter and @TogetherRising is my baby. So check out @TogetherRising. That's our nonprofit. That's just, uh, it's, I really think that every word that I write or speak is really about Together Rising.

Layla: Yeah. I really appreciate the work that you do through there and I know I've supported some of the campaigns that you've done through there as well.

Glennon: Thank you Layla. Thank you for your work in the world. You're just utterly amazing and I hope that you keep showing up exactly as you are wherever you are forever.

Layla: Thank you. Okay. Our final question, um, Glennon what does it mean to you to be a good ancestor?

Glennon: I want to create, um, inside my home, inside all of my little, little spheres of influence in my communities, a place where my children, their children, your children and their children, all children can begin to show up and bring their full selves to the table knowing that they will be seen and valued and protected. That's it.

Layla: That resonated very deeply with me. Thank you.

Glennon: Thank you, Layla.