

Laylee: Welcome to the Le Imadi podcast. In this quick snack size episode, you'll hear from Joanna Waterfall. She's the founder of the Yellow Conference. Joanna shares what really made a speaker stand out at her events. And it wasn't just about their talk, it was about the way that they chose to show up for the community before, during, and after their time on stage.

Joanna: So especially with yellow, we had such a genuine, authentic community that was, not about, I don't know how to really put it, but they just weren't about like the fake, they wanted the real like juicy, , tell me the deepest stuff that you can tell me.

It was a very like, let's get deep, let's go to the nitty gritty stuff really quickly. And so you can kind of get a sense for who's going to be able to, do that on a stage. Once you kind of start to build that relationship, I personally never liked going through a PR company or a manager. It just, I always felt like it didn't allow for the person who was speaking to really get who we were as a community.

I always wanted to. Know that somebody understood what they were walking into, and I felt very protective of this community. And I was like, these folks are, , they're incredible. , Do you understand? This is not just something to check off your list that you spoke at this event. Like, I want you to know who we are.

I want you to enjoy who we are, , and like be a part of it. And that, you know, that doesn't always happen depending on who you're working with. , And I understand, you know. Some of these speakers who we would have later on, they were big speakers and they had, they would come in and do their speech and then they would leave.

But I always loved it when a speaker would make an effort to get to know where they were coming and the community there. And if they hung out, like, I like when speakers hung out and like, sat in the audience, that would just make my heart soar.

So going back to the question about relationships, it didn't, it didn't necessarily have to start there, but.

I think that it always made a difference with how that person relationally then connected with me and connected with the community, if that makes sense.

Laylee: That makes total sense to me. And I, I mean, I couldn't agree more, especially when it comes to like creative industry and like entrepreneurial events. Like we are a community and so I think having speakers who are community driven is really important and who are not just necessarily showing up to like, give their talk and peace out.

That seems, that's like definitely corporate speaking in my mind. And I, and it's also really refreshing because I think. Most of the answers we've had from other hosts have been very much like, yeah, relationship preexisting is, is important. I like the idea that it's, sometimes it's really not, because for me, well, I'm trying really hard not to like, interject my own opinions into these interviews because we're, I'm, I'm trying to get like the nitty gritty of like everybody else's opinions, but. I agree with you is where I'm trying to go with that. Like I

try so hard to bring in fresh perspectives, new faces, people I don't know that I would wanna learn from.

And so I just, I do think that's encouraging for our speakers to hear.

Anybody who wants to get on these stages is like, you don't have to be best friends with everybody in order to get a message that needs to be heard, heard.

Joanna: Yeah. And I mean, in fact, like this isn't always the case, but there would be times where I did feel like people were trying to get to know me just 'cause they wanted to speak and I could smell it. And there's nothing, there's nothing inherently wrong with that. Like I get it, like network, you're like, I do it too.

But there was also. A few times where I was like, oh I know you're, you really wanna speak and I love that, but it, it, it might not be a good fit for whatever reason but like I still will wanna, you know, be your friend. Like, let's still,

Laylee: Mm-hmm.

Joanna: I think I always appreciate when someone's just upfront and like, Hey, I would love to speak at your conference instead of acting like I'm trying to be your friend, and maybe she'll ask me to speak like the, I never liked that.

Laylee: I love Joanna's. Reminder that staying present, engaging with the audience and being a part of the community is what makes a speaker

unforgettable. It's not just about the 30 minutes you spend on stage, it's about how you show up in the room throughout the event.

If you want more behind the scenes insights from event hosts like Joanna, you can find the full interviews inside my sought After speaker system course, and that's where I'm gonna help you build the kind of speaker presence that gets you invited back again and again.

See you on the next episode of the Lely Imadi podcast.