

COVER STAR

W E
L O ♥ E
J O U R D A N

#Girlboss, #Mumboss, just call Jourdan Dunn The Boss ▶

by HELEN WHITAKER

PHOTOGRAPHS *by* DAVID SLIJPER



FASHION DIRECTOR KAREN PRESTON



Top, jeans and earrings
all Saint Laurent by
Anthony Vaccarello



COVER STAR

“
I’M A BIG
BELIEVER
THAT IF YOU VISION
IT, IT WILL
HAPPEN
”

Jacket, vest and shorts all
Alexander Wang; boots Dr Martens



“
I DON'T
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TERM
'REAL
WOMEN',
- I AM VERY
MUCH REAL
”

Top, skirt and boots all Loewe



An hour after Jourdan Dunn has to leave Glamour's cover shoot in New York to catch a flight to LA, she posts an Instagram story. It shows her reading material for the journey and is captioned: "I should have read this before my interview today." The book is *TED Talks: The Official TED Guide to Public Speaking*. The interview she's talking about was with me.

So what went wrong? Did she give one-word answers, ramble on without actually saying anything, or walk out? Nope, nope and nope. She was open, friendly and happy to talk about anything, a far cry from some of the subjects I've profiled (yes, actor-who-didn't-want-to-be-there and refused to answer even the most innocuous of questions, I'm talking about *you*). It just wasn't, she tells me later, the best she could do.

"I'm in a new stage of my life, a new chapter, and I want to give something interesting. I was just so disappointed in myself," she tells me in London a week later. "At school, I would always know the answer, but be scared to put my hand up because I get nervous and start muddling my words up and stutter. Sometimes in interviews, in my head I know how I want it to sound, but it comes out scrambled."

For the record, that's not at all how she came across, but what's clear is that when the 26-year-old model-turned-businesswoman does something, she's all in.

Our second meet-up is on the set of the campaign shoot for LonDunn + Missguided by Jourdan Dunn, the 96-piece clothing collaboration she's launching with the brand this month. Plenty of 'collaborations' begin and end with the celebrity linking their name to the label, but when the online retailer approached Jourdan, she immediately concerned herself with the minutiae of the project. "They'd say, 'You don't have to come for the design meeting,' and I was like, 'What do you mean? That's the whole purpose of it,'" she says. "I want to be there for the casting and the design, and for everything. I want to have the final say, because it's my name on it and it's a representation of me. I don't want to have my name on it if other people have done all the work. And also, if it all goes to shit, it's got my name on it. It's something I truly believe in and want to have longevity." A second collection is already planned for later this year, with Jourdan determined to top this one.

Her 2016 kids' clothing line with M&S, Lil' LonDunn, sprung from a desire to design for her eight-year-old son, Riley, but she had more selfish motivations for this range: creating clothes that she wanted to buy and, more importantly, that would fit her.

"The struggle was real when I was growing up," she laughs about her 5ft 11in height. "I was like, I need sleeves that are long

enough." She was a tall and skinny teenager; too self-conscious for it to cross her mind that her proportions were ideal for a modelling career until she was scouted by Storm Management in a London branch of Primark at age 15. She quickly went from London teen to one of the UK's most in-demand models. In the 2008 S/S season, she walked in 75 catwalk shows, and she's appeared in campaigns for Burberry, Topshop, H&M, Kate Spade New York and Maybelline. These days, she splits her time between her place in New York and her mum's house in Greenford, where Riley also lives. And yes, she is stunning. Even before hair and make-up get to work at the cover shoot, the willowy frame, flawless skin and perfect bone structure are unmistakable.

It's hard to imagine that a collection designed with that raw material in mind would translate well for us real women. "One thing," Jourdan says politely, "I don't really like the term 'real women'. When you compare 'real women' to models, it's like they are not real, and it's like, what do you mean? I live on earth. I have breasts, I have a vagina. I am very much real."

For women without model proportions then, I modify. "I want people who are 5ft 5in and skinny, or 5ft 5in and curvy, or 5ft 10in – all types of women – to feel comfortable in it and feel good. So, once I got the mindset of how I wanted it to be, I had to then think, 'OK, maybe that fabric might not be too complementary to this kind of woman or that kind of woman.' We played around." To her 2 million Instagram followers, Jourdan is very much real, and that's why they love her, even if her candour on social media has occasionally got her into trouble. "I don't regret it at all, but I'm a bit smarter about it now," she says, with a wry grin. Her feed is still updated daily, but these days her output is more considered. Because, well, monetisation. "It's a business," she says in New York, "I'm getting my head around the fact that social media is also a way to brand yourself and show everybody who you are." But she's still committed to keeping up the flow of selfies that her fans love (average likes: 45k) – and she makes a conscious effort at both shoots to take some to post.

But will we ever see anything as candid again as the 2014 post that showed off her stretch marks and caused the internet to have a bit of a meltdown? "I honestly didn't post it *because* of my stretch marks," she says, laughing. "I posted it because I thought my crop top looked cute, and my stomach looked quite nice and flat. Then I looked at the comments and everyone was going on about my stretch marks. But I just thought, 'Oh, OK, that's just the norm, no?' It wasn't my reason, but I'm happy I did, because I'm real and even 'someone like me' has stretch marks."

Because aside from branding, authenticity is Jourdan's other 2017 buzzword. "I'm not just going to put my name to ►



Jacket and trousers both DKNY; hoodie
LonDunn + Missguided by Jourdan Dunn

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something random. With the kids' line, it was authentic because I have a child [Riley appeared in the ad campaign], and with Missguided, I want to be able to dress women.” What else fits the remit? “Cooking.” Jourdan was helping her grandma in the kitchen from age seven or eight and has already hosted cooking shows online (*Well Dunn* on Jay-Z's *Life+Times* YouTube channel, and *How It's Dunn* on i-D's lifestyle platform – you've got to admire a woman who loves a pun as much as Jourdan). Now, she's applying that laser focus to a cookbook that focuses on spice: “But not just heat. Different flavours, like turmeric, cumin, cinnamon, that liven up dishes.” She spends evenings researching recipes and trying to come up with the perfect hot sauce, with a view to getting the cookbook out later this year.

Nothing stands in the way of Brand Dunn. Except her inner critic, she says. Right now, she's in a good headspace, but she says it wasn't always that way. Just a few years ago, she says, “I was having negative thoughts about myself, and I had to change that because it doesn't get you anywhere. I had to reprogramme my mind for positivity, and really look hard at myself so I could find something I actually liked about myself.”

Jourdan is a big fan of a self-help book, and that's what helped her start thinking positively. “My favourite was Louise L Hay's *How To Love Yourself*. It reshaped my whole mindset. Everything makes sense, it all does start from self-loving and forgetting, blocking out negative thoughts and other people's thoughts of you.” She credits regular morning meditation and writing down five small, achievable goals each night for keeping her focused. “I'm a big believer that if you vision it, and write it down, it's going to be like that.” But that doesn't mean she never wavers.

“I have down moments, but I just let them be moments and not drag on,” she says. “Because then it will just affect me and my energy and other people. I'm allowed to have those moments, but I'm like, ‘Be a big girl, get on with it, you've got shit to do.’”

You heard the woman: buckle up; she's got shit to do. ●

LonDunn + Missguided by Jourdan Dunn launches on March 11



COVER STAR

Jacket, jumpsuit and
trousers all Céline

Hair: Ben Skervin
at Streeters NY
Make-up: Renee Garnes
at Next Management
Nails: Rica Romain
at LMC Worldwide
Senior Fashion
Assistant: Molly Haylor

