



## Variety Act Miami #16: Meet Tabitha Rose, Founder of Life to Paper Publishing, Life to Legacy Foundation, The Bookshop, and Life to Paper Book Festival.

Vital storyteller, writer, and entrepreneur brimming with joie de vivre.



Natalie Guevara

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You've just stepped into the Sweet Sixteen issue of Variety Act Miami. Welcome! I'm your *compère*, Natalie Guevara.

I'm fascinated by what brings people to Miami, what keeps them around, and how they become an indelible part of their communities here. **Tabitha Rose**, a native of Woodbridge, Ontario and current resident of Miami's historic Buena Vista enclave, is a storyteller, writer, and entrepreneur who has taken to her adopted home like an industrious swan to an expansive pond. In the years following her permanent move to the Magic City in 2016, she has grown her business **Life to Paper Publishing**—an independent publishing house providing ghostwriting, editing, and hybrid-publishing services to diverse, "heart-centered" individuals who are compelled to put their lives to paper—and become a vital force across Miami's literary and creative circles.

tab\_nav





A post shared by Tabitha Rose (@tab\_nav)

In addition to running the publishing house, Tabitha manages the **Life to Legacy Foundation**, its not-for-profit organization dedicated to providing individuals with education and resources to empower them to write their life stories; and **The Bookshop**, a brick-and-mortar bookstore with a spotlight on supporting local authors and artists that opened in Buena Vista over the summer of 2021. This month, The Bookshop and the rest of the neighborhood come alive with author talks, community workshops, movie nights, brunches and tea parties via the inaugural **Life to Paper Book Festival**, which celebrates authors, creatives, and book lovers and connects them over their shared passion for life stories.





Tabitha Rose of [Life to Paper Publishing](#) and this month's [Life to Paper Book Festival](#). *Illustration by [Natasha Villarraga](#).*

Tabitha is a champion of sharing lived experiences. What began as a singular **life-writing experience with her grandmother** has evolved into a mission to help others commit their lives to paper and share them with hearts and minds near and far.

Below, hear more from Tabitha about what draws her to life stories, her experiences before embarking on bringing to life Life to Paper and its many entities, her work process, and, *certo*, her Miami favorites.

**MEET TABITHA ROSE, FOUNDER OF LIFE TO PAPER PUBLISHING, LIFE TO LEGACY FOUNDATION, THE BOOKSHOP, AND LIFE TO PAPER BOOK FESTIVAL.**

**On how coming of age in the Toronto area informed how she moves through the world:**

I originally grew up in Woodbridge, a suburban community just north of Toronto, made up predominantly of Italian immigrant families. I cherish this time of my life because it is where I first learned about the importance of sharing and passing on family traditions. I learned the Italian language and developed a love for cooking and gathering around the table with loved ones.

To this day, I celebrate Sugo Sunday, a time I dedicate once a week to cooking traditional Italian tomato sauce and other dishes and welcome friends and family around the table. This is something I've done no matter where I've been traveling to or where I live.

Knowing what I know now, it is no coincidence that I first learned how the simple art of gathering around the table helps people open up, facilitating connection and encouraging them to share their life stories. I see now how the dots connected for me from those early memories.

tab\_nav



A post shared by Tabitha Rose (@tab\_nav)

### **On her first spark for storytelling and on what little Tabitha was like:**

School projects definitely inspired me to capture and share stories. I specifically remember a time when I moved schools every year, and, by the beginning of my fourth school, I felt the need to introduce myself to my classmates by showing them who I was and what my story was. To do this, I enlisted my mom and, with my parents' VHS camera, I asked her to drive me to all of my previous schools around the city so I could actually show my peers the places I had been to and how they made me who I was up until that point.

Music was also a big part of my life. My dad had a huge collection of albums that I would borrow and play on my Walkman before bed or when walking around the city. Although I love music and its many genres, I would definitely say that the songs that influenced me the most since I was nine years old were by a Canadian band called **Blue Rodeo** and John Lennon's "**Imagine**." Whenever I listened to it, I was immediately transported to a trance-like dream state that only made me think of my life in terms of endless possibility.

### **On the biggest lesson from her early professional chapters in politics and capital markets:**

Throughout my career, whether it was initially in politics and later on working in capital markets, the common theme is that I was always telling and selling a story. In politics, it was about the candidates, the platform, the policies. In capital markets and investor relations, it was about the company and its leaders. Nowadays, it is about the people in our books—or, as a publisher, it is helping to tell the stories of our authors and their work.

Also, from the beginning of my career, I was always exposed to working in large gatherings with people older than me, meaning with far more experience. I was always curious and confident to approach them and strike a conversation with genuine curiosity and a desire to learn. That served me well then and it is something that I do to this day. Seeing the world and connecting with people, knowing that you can always learn from them, is what has allowed me to be where I am today.

Finally, working in finance inevitably taught me the business side of things. Even when I think I am not the numbers person, and much more of the creative and storyteller, it is evident when running my three ventures, working and leading a team, keeping an organized schedule and marketing various talents at once, that I learned how to do all this while working in more traditionally structured environments like politics and finance.



**On what helped her connect with her grandmother—in many ways, the inspiration for *Life to Paper*—as two souls:**

Many things connect us, and even though I wouldn't say I am like her, she is a role model for me. The way she carries herself and lives her life is inspiring for me and I strive to be much like her. Some attributes of hers that really resonate with are... First, her independence. My grandma is a woman that rarely asks for help. When it came to writing her life story, she was actually hiring a ghostwriter to do it and it was me who stepped in and said I would like to do it with her and for her.

I also admire her curiosity and desire to constantly keep learning, reading, and growing. She always has plans and looks for ways to help people. An entrepreneur through and through, when she first moved to Canada she strived to find her way around a new city. She is my inspiration and a constant reminder of a life well lived. I've got some big shoes to fill. Words are simply not enough to describe how much she means to me; I love her!

**On her first impressions of Miami, and on how her feelings have evolved after living in the city for close to six years:**

My initial impression of Miami was what most people think of the city: A tourist destination, known for its nightlife, beaches, and just an all-around good-time vacation spot. However, after moving here permanently, my eyes were opened wide and I got to see the many layers that make up this exciting city.

There is an emerging creative community—a kind of Renaissance—filled with musicians, artists, and writers ready to welcome you at the table with open arms. It very quickly made me feel like I had found my home.

lagniappe\_house





A post shared by Lagniappe (@lagniappe\_house)

### On the live music spot **Lagniappe** and the meaning it holds for her:

Lagniappe is the first place where I felt the pulse of the creative community that would welcome me with open arms and help me feel supported. It is the place where I first felt truly in love with my life.

The story of how this came to be is that I found a place to live right above Lagniappe and, at night, I could feel the music downstairs vibrate through my apartment's floor. Contrary to this being an inconvenience, it felt warm and welcoming and I would usually go downstairs to hear the band playing; very quickly I would meet new people and I remember feeling the ambiance was glittering and thinking, *"I love my life, I love my story."* This wasn't a one-time thing; it was like re-reading your favorite book over and over, or re-watching a movie you love. This is why I felt Lagniappe was a reflection of who I am, my beginnings, and what my purpose would come to be. A place of gathering that is warm and welcoming, a bit eclectic, and where many pieces that seem separate at first have their individual story but, when combined, fit together seamlessly.

### On the song that brings her back to her first year of living in Miami:

"Panda" by Desiigner. It was playing as I was ready to take off on a short trip to Texas to close a very important chapter of my life. All I could feel was excitement and reassurance that I was exactly where I was supposed to be. Of course, at the time I didn't know exactly how things would turn out; I just felt pure joy and trusted that everything that I needed was happening for me. I felt strong!

### **On the Life to Paper process and on trusting when she's meant to be working with someone to help them tell their story:**

My process with Life to Paper is as follows:

I lead my client through a "Dream Session." We explore insightful questions like who they are, what they believe in, what they see in the future for the world, and, most importantly, how they see themselves either shaping or as part of that change. This is a very interactive process that helps me discover who they are, their gifts, their *whys*. Based on that information, we create a plan if we both feel it is a great fit.

When there isn't a fit, like it happens in many businesses—not everyone can be your client—I will gladly recommend them to someone who is a natural match for them. This is the big secret behind why I get to work every day doing something I love. My clients and I choose each other, and I am not afraid of losing someone. Instead, we are each gaining a better match if through our process we discovered we are not the right fit at this time.

### **On what Life to Paper Publishing and the Life to Legacy Foundation have taught her about listening to elders and honoring their stories and experiences:**

My work in Life to Paper Publishing—and the times when I have the pleasure of listening to elders tell their stories—has taught me so much. Each individual has a treasure chest of lessons to share. I proudly have coined the phrase, "Don't ask Google. Ask a grandparent." So often we look to our technology for the answers. I have found everything I need and more from my own grandparents and the elders



I have worked with.



**On her favorite aspect of assembling the Life to Paper team:**

My favorite part is finding and connecting with people whose hearts are invested in this as much mine is, and whose skills and talents never cease to amaze me. It is so rewarding to hear them come up with ideas constantly; it allows me to learn everyday. More than a team, we've built a family.

I am truly grateful for my newly appointed Editor-in-Chief, [Flor Ana Mireles](#). This young woman has a heart of gold, is whole-heartedly committed, and is a beautiful genius!

## On recently opening The Bookshop and how she transcended challenges to get the brick-and-mortar space in Buena Vista up and running:

It's easy to get caught up in the busy-ness trap and the go-go mentality that comes with running a business or multiple projects at one. There are many moving pieces, and I have always been super detail-oriented.

One day, I was talking to my dad when he said, "Honey, enjoy the journey." It stopped me in my tracks. What was really the point of doing all this if I was not savoring it? Later that day, when picking up a few things at Target, I came across a mug that read, "Enjoy the journey." Again, it was a beautiful reminder to take a breath, look around, and appreciate what is around me rather than rushing towards the next task.

I still drink out of that mug today, so I am constantly reminded to take it all in and be grateful for where I am today.



A post shared by Tabitha Rose (@tab\_nav)

### **On what she's up to at 9 am on a Tuesday:**

Making my coffee, sitting down and writing my gratitude list, and getting ready to start the work day with my first client meeting or Dream Session with a client. I'm typically doing all of these from home, so I'm dressed comfortably. A go-to for this time of day are my Hoochi pants by a wonderful Miami-based business owner, Nina Stein.

### **On where we find her at 7 pm on a Sunday:**

You'll find me walking back and forth between the kitchen and the yard as I welcome guests and finish making a delicious meal for my traditional Sugo Sunday!

tab\_nav





A post shared by Tabitha Rose (@tab\_nav)

### **On her cultural diet:**

Currently, I am re-connecting and re-reading [Toni Morrison](#)'s books.

When it comes to music, this is always a staple in my life. At the moment, I am listening to a lot of [Eric Clapton](#) after attending his concert, and also [Van Morrison](#).

Whenever I need to relax and wind down, I play some calming piano music and [binaural beats](#); these are two tones processed by the brain as slightly different frequencies that help with relaxation. Not a scientific explanation; just giving you a bit of context in case you'd like to look further into it.

### **On the one quality she wants the Miami community to take away from the first Life to Paper Book Festival:**

I want people to leave feeling they know when the next time they are coming back is!

I want to recreate and share with others that same feeling I experienced when I first came to Miami; that sense of feeling welcomed, as if people had been waiting for me to come here, almost in a meant-to-be kind of way. I hope people leave knowing that they will come back, because they feel that they find a part of themselves here. A true sense of belonging.

lifetopaperbookfest







A post shared by Life to Paper Book Festival (@lifetopaperbookfest)

## TABITHA'S MIAMI FAVORITES.

**Miami anthem (current or classic!):** *"Todo Tiene Su Final"* by Hector Lavoe. It is the ultimate scream for letting go of control and surrendering to what is right here, right now. Knowing that things can end at any moment makes me feel more present and intentionally grateful for where I am today.

**Restaurant, bars, cafés, diners, bakeries, & ventanitas:** Buena Vista Deli. Lemoni Café. Mandolin. La Latina.



One of my all-time favorites is [Jimmy's Eastside Diner](#), because it feels like home. I like going there on a rainy day for breakfast while I read a book.

I also enjoy delicious smoothies and juices at [Green G](#).

**Miami performer, author, or creative:** [José Ivannes](#) is not only my friend, but my favourite musician in Miami. Side note: He is also my vocal coach. Learning to sing has been the greatest joy in my life and he made it possible. Shoutout to Sarah and Valeria who gather and sing and play music at my home often. I love these ladies.

**Cultural centers, art shops, & bookstores:** [The Bookshop](#), of course! And [Esquina de Abuela](#) is home to me, as well.

**Live music venues:** [Lagniappe](#), my backyard on Tuesdays... but pretty much anywhere that is playing music. Music plays, and I'll follow.

**Shopping:** [Earthly Chic](#), a female-owned business in Buena Vista that has brightened up my outfits since I discovered them. I also love [Frankie](#) in Sunset Harbor.

**Grooming:** D Jones at [Nue Studio](#). He has an amazing heart and crazy talent!

**The Great Outdoors:** Watching the sunrise or sunset in Sunset Harbor at [Maurice Gibb Memorial Park](#). I also so much appreciate [The Standard Hotel](#) for their beautifully designed green space, which is open to the public.

**Small businesses & local vendors:** Continuing with my favourite shops, I like to buy gifts from local vendors, and I've found that yoga shops usually feature amazing local talents. A few of my favorites include [Green Monkey](#), which carries State of Gratitude; [Ahana Yoga](#) for its lovely gifts; and I love going to [Barry's Bootcamp](#) in Sunset Harbor—special shoutout to Kathryn Sauser, amazing instructor and the owner of [POP Journals](#), short for Progress Over Perfection. I love her mission and her beautiful work and heart!


**The recommendation you'll always give to a first-time Miami visitor:** Go out and wander the city alone! You will be pleasantly surprised with what you find.


**THANKS, TABITHA!**

Keep tabs on Tabitha at [@tab\\_nav](#), and follow and support Life to Paper Publishing at [@lifetopaper](#); the Life to Legacy Foundation at [@lifetolegacy](#); and The Bookshop at [@thebookshopbyltp](#). The [Life to Paper Book Festival](#) is currently underway and runs through the end of November—check out programming updates [here](#) and at [@lifetopaperbookfest](#).

Until next time, *un besito!*

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