

EPISODE 540

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:35.1]

FT: You're listening to So Money everyone, welcome back, February 27th, episode 540. I'm your host Farnoosh Torabi. As the saying goes, "dress for the job you want, not the one you have", right? I remember hearing that when I was in my 20's and thinking, "Well, better stop shopping at H&M then I guess," right? What if you can't exactly afford Prada? What if the affordable options just don't fit right or they're made out of lousy materials, that's where today's guest enter the picture.

Dorie Smith and Emelyn Northway are the cofounders of Of Mercer. It's a career wear line for the modern professional woman. They met one fateful day while both going to business school at the university of Pennsylvania. They spotted each other across a crowded room because you know what? They were wearing identical outfits. They initially launched the brand back in 2013 as an eCommerce site. Since then, the company's received mucho praise for many media outlets including the New York Times, Forbes, Inc Magazine.

Last year they actually ventured from online to a brick and mortar store in New York City, which is an interesting transition, right? Going from online to actually physical space. How do they do that? Also, how did two business students with no experience in fashion really get the know how and the money to start a successful fashion line, and how to know when pairing up with the business partner makes sense.

Here's Emelyn Northway and Dorie Smith.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:02:06.1]

FT: Emelyn Northway and Dorie Smith, welcome to So Money. Co founders of Of Mercer. Once I am done baby making, I'm going to try your clothes, promise.

Welcome to the show.

[0:02:18.3]

DS: Great, thanks so much for having us on.

[0:02:20.5]

FT: You know, we should tell the audience how we met. We met at the Rockettes.

[0:02:25.2]

DS: Yes, it actually was one of the best nights of Emelyn and my life.

[0:02:29.7]

FT: Really?

[0:02:30.2]

DS: We're big Christmas fans.

[0:02:33.1]

FT: Yeah, we were both there as guests of Chase, I'm a partner with Chase and I believe you guys have worked with them in the past as well. So it was a really nice way for them to let us all get together and celebrate the year and yeah, we got this kind of back stage passes to go see the Rockettes and Christmas Spectacular.

Whether you celebrate Christmas or not, it is quite the show and it was nice to make your acquaintance and I thought at that moment when we me, got to get you two on the show because not only do you have great stories as entrepreneurs but I think what you're doing with your business is also very groundbreaking.

I'll let you brag about Of Mercer for a little bit. Tell us a little bit about the Genesis for the idea for the clothing line and how it differentiates?

[0:03:22.7]

DS: Absolutely. This is Dorie. Emelyn and I cofounded Of Mercer about three years ago, a little over three years ago and it actually started with a personal problem. So Emelyn and I both came from conservative business background, I was in consulting, Emelyn was in finance and we had to get dressed every day for work and it was a real struggle for us.

It's kind of unbelievable with all this movement and excitement around women in the workplace and promoting women and making sure that we're kind of seen as equals that it was so hard for us to get dressed every morning. We met at business school, we were at Wharton Business School and...

[0:04:01.0]

FT: Can I ask what was so hard about it? Was it just that you felt you had to dress differently every day? Men wear uniforms, they can get away with a suit and tie. Same suit and tie if they want four days a week. What did you feel was the challenge?

[0:04:14.6]

EN: Yeah, this is Emelyn speaking. I think it was twofold. One was that being a woman and navigating for the office dress codes was actually really tricky. We needed to look stylish, we also need to look appropriate and a lot of the mass market brands didn't really understand what that meant.

They were pushing short skirts or leather fabrics on us, which were never going to work for us. It was about finding that balance of what's appropriate and also stylish for us. Also about price and quality. Just starting out in the work force, we didn't have \$500 to be spending on a single dress at a designer store.

We also didn't want a dress that we were going to buy for \$100 that was going to fall apart after two wears. So it was only about finding that balance of what can you afford but then also, from a quality standpoint, what should we deserve as working women as well.

[0:05:06.0]

FT: Right, that makes sense. Yeah, so clearly a need in the market place and it's been a long time since I've had to dress up for work. I mean, I dress up sometimes for work events but I have to give you guys a lot of credit for every day.

Especially now that I'm pregnant, I'm so thankful that I don't have to work in the financial environment because I know it can be really conservative. I work in the Wall Street area, I see the sea of black suits, where's the creativity?

[0:05:34.8]

DS: Yeah, it's interesting, you're talking about kind of the most conservative of our customers, so customers who wear suits every day. That's kind of what we expected when we first launched Of Mercer, we said, okay, we're going to have lawyers, we're going to have bankers, we're going to have consultants and we've been surprised by how many other industries have women that are looking for clothes like ours.

There are definitely some pieces that we sell that I wouldn't have wore into a client meeting when I was in consulting and it's a little bit more casual but I think there's just a real movement around looking and feeling your best in the office and for some people, that might mean jeans and a T shirt but for a lot of women it means feeling put together and having a really well tailored, well-made dress.

[0:06:15.8]

FT: I'm going through your site right now and it's beautiful, well-tailored, like you said, pieces that seem to work really well as kind of the shell of an outfit. It's versatile in the sense that if you do work in a more casual environment or more fashionable or fashion driven office, you can accessorize, you do it up or if you conversely work in a more conservative office then that same grey dress is sufficient.

[0:06:44.0]

DS: Exactly. I think one of the things that we love to do too is have those things, conservative styles, the same dress but infuse it with a lot of color. We actually can get creative even if you're in a market of a certain environment and that's what's exciting to us.

[0:06:56.6]

FT: The two of you found each other, discovered each other at Wharton and I read that what kind of was the light bulb moment was that you were both wearing the same dress? Take me to that moment, what happened.

[0:07:11.8]

DS: Yes, literally the same dress. It was the first week of Wharton and they have all these orientation events and then there was one that was kind of meet and greet everybody in your class and Emelyn and I showed up in exactly the same dress and it wasn't that special. It was A-line black, it had a cute belt and it kind of dawned on us that this was us putting our best stylish/professional foot forward and after years and years of working, we ended up with the exact same dress.

[0:07:43.3]

EN: But there was a very awkward moment where I sort of looked at Dorie and she looked at me from across the room and we're like, "Okay, I guess we have to talk to each other because

we're wearing the same dress and it's awkward to ignore it." But before we realized that, it was definitely awkward.

[0:07:58.1]

FT: Was it pretty soon after meeting that you decided to start this business or was it after school? How did it evolve?

[0:08:04.8]

DS: We both went to Wharton thinking we were going to do something entrepreneurial, neither one of us had really kind of hammered out what that was and were open to exploring it when we were at Wharton and that was kind of the beginning of a conversation around professional clothes for women.

We very much agreed on the fact that we needed up choosing between a designer brand on sale and cheaper brand, mass market brands and we wanted to really test out if that was something that other people were facing. We utilized Wharton as an opportunity to really dig into that.

[0:08:38.0]

FT: Right, because a lot of your classmates too are probably in that demo. How is business doing? How many years have you been in business and I read somewhere that you're growing triple percentages every year but maybe that was just an exaggeration? You can tell me.

[0:08:55.6]

EN: It sounds right to me. Things are going really well. We just passed our 3rd year of business as an online brand and just over a year ago, we launched our first brick and mortar store in the Flat Iron District in New York. That's been huge for us.

What we've realized is having the offline presence is really important for establishing credibility and also giving our customers flexibility to try offline as well and it's just been great to really have a place where we can have events and do things that really show off our personality and our mission, that we're not just about selling and a little bit more organic.

Having a combination of the two has been great. Currently we're looking to expand to other locations as well. We are also excited to be launching a new website and branding in the coming month, which we're very excited about. But yeah, overall, things are going really well.

[0:09:55.7]

FT: How do two students start a business financially? How did you get this off the ground and give yourselves the financial runway to execute this?

[0:10:06.1]

DS: Yeah, that's a great question and something that every entrepreneur struggles with. There are a lot of ways to do it. Initially Emelyn and I self-funded the company so we had both been in industries where we were pretty well paid and had been able to have a savings account. That's what we started the company with. We really invested in ourselves, we invested in our idea and made sure that we were really testing everything in a very methodical way so we were utilizing that money to the best of our ability.

Then since then, we have raised a seed round of funding. We are trying to stay as lean as possible. For us, it's been really important to make sure that we're testing everything and that we're building a company that's sustainable even when there's no outside funding coming in. This is a problem a lot of companies have faced where they get great evaluations, great funding and then the moment that turns off there, they're in trouble. That's not the company that we're trying to build.

[0:11:03.0]

FT: Yes, that was definitely the trend of the last four, or five years and I also am very skeptical of the companies that get these billion dollar evaluations and they're not profitable. It's kind of like, well, what is the headline? What is the real headline?

[0:11:18.5]

DS: I think especially in the industry like fashion where brand loyalty gets built up over time. I think that's kind of the value of the company, is that over time that comes and that's not turning VC billion dollar evaluations overnight. We're not going to pretend it will.

[0:11:36.8]

FT: How do you get the word out? I mean, first you were online, which in some ways can be easier but also has its own challenges as far as cutting through all the competition and all the noise. So how did you initially launch and get your customers to the point now where you've been confident to start a brick and mortar store, which is very expensive as well?

[0:11:59.9]

EN: Yeah, for us, a lot of our early strategy was really based on generating word of mouth, which was something that was more easy for us to, as we were warming with the group of 800 women or so plus their networks and our existing networks and really tapping into those people to help us spread the word.

One of the things that we didn't do, which we stick to today is that we didn't spend thousands and thousands of dollars hiring a firm to do a big splashy launch for us. We wanted to make sure that we were doing it in an organic way and really getting out the kinks and testing it out ourselves.

We really relied on that more organically ways to generate that early traction and growth and it worked for us really well. Especially because it was natural and when you hear your friends talking about it and their friends are talking about it then there's a much easier way to get people involved to sell your product.

[0:12:57.9]

DS: The other thing that has been really helpful for us is obviously press, and almost all the press we've gotten, especially the really big pieces, New York Times, Forbes, Inc, that kind of stuff has been organic as well. Also the press pieces that we have achieved haven't felt like we paid a PR team to get that for us. Then that also just feels much more natural and the readers understand that as well.

[0:13:23.8]

FT: That's pretty awesome that you haven't had to hire a PR company to get pieces in the New York Times and just goes to show you, you can bootstrap a business, you really can. More credit to you.

How did you know that the two of you were going to work so well together? I mean, clearly you have the same style taste but any advice for those of us listening who are interested in going into business with a friend, a colleague, an acquaintance. Partnering up with anybody takes a lot of thought.

[0:13:57.9]

EN: It's a great question and often a tricky one. After sort of having this meet and greet revelation, we were definitely friends before we went full force into business and we realized that early on. But one of the things that I think helped sort of transition from being friends to business partners was setting some early timelines.

One of the things that we both agreed to is that we were going to do this sort of initial test round. We called it a "beta launch" and we invested our own money into producing five pieces that we were then going to turn around and sell to our colleagues at Wharton and just get a sense for, was this an idea that had legs, was it worth investing more money into and going forward with?

We both agreed that that was sort of going to be the next point where we were going to decide whether to go forward or not and if we agreed that we are both in after that then we were both in.

It gave us really sort of like a chance to have an out if we needed it and luckily, we didn't, we both were in the same page. But I think making sure you're sort of giving each other as friends and business partners, a timeline and place where you can both sort of regroup and decide if you still want to be in it. That's real helpful.

[0:15:08.8]

FT: Test each other out in a relatively risk free environment.

[0:15:13.5]

DS: One other question we get a lot is about our roles within the company. So obviously we started the company and there were just two of us and then since then, we've hired plenty of people and it actually was, I think the fact that we didn't define our roles from the get go that we now have roles where we're both very effective.

Neither of us had started companies before, we didn't know our style, we didn't know exactly what we were going to be like in this entrepreneurial world. Kind of falling into what we were really strong at and what we were really interested in and what our skills were most useful for has been great for us because I think a lot of times people founders were like, "Ok, I'm the COO, you're the CFO and then we're going to hire a CMO," and it doesn't work that well. It's easier to kind of figure it out organically and naturally than brush into the role definition.

[0:16:11.7]

FT: In my experience interviewing other fashion designers and fashion brands, it sounds to me like they always knew they wanted to be designers, they were obsessed with fashion, they were sketching since they were 10 years old, they went to design school and the two of you come from, it seems like, a different background where you worked in finance and business and

consulting. So where does the talent come from? Who is the sketcher in the partnership? Who is the fashion...

[0:16:41.1]

DS: Neither of us actually.

[0:16:42.6]

FT: Neither of you? So who comes up with the ideas?

[0:16:45.6]

EN: We have a full-time designer who was, who has really been with us since we did that beta line, which was when we realized that either of us were actually sketchers and she went to Parson's, she had her own tailored clothing line before she joined us and she's really skilled with that and we're lucky to have her sort of behind the scenes actually doing the sketching. Luckily for you we're not the ones doing that.

[0:17:13.6]

FT: Well, maybe I thought you had some hidden talents or something you know? We never know.

[0:17:17.1]

DS: It's also being good to have Asia — her name is Asia — with the fashion background and then us with the business background because we really look at things in a different way. Especially when it comes to business dressing, because Asia hadn't actually stepped foot in an office until we did a trunk show at Deloitte consulting.

[0:17:35.5]

FT: Where does the name Of Mercer come from?

[0:17:38.3]

EN: Mercer is actually a high end fabric distributor in London back in the 1700's and we chose the name because we thought it was really speaking to what we were trying to do, which was offer a higher quality product of price point that was accessible.

We liked this idea of adding "Of" on it because we thought it was — we believe that we're part of a broader movement of women who are embracing their creative side and their personalities in their office wardrobes and are expecting more from everything they're wearing to the office and thinking they don't need a separate wardrobe from work and weekend; it can all be one and work for them.

[0:18:18.2]

FT: It also sounds very Urban. Mercer's obviously a British street in London and SoHo and a lot of the names and New York come from the UK, but when's your store on Mercer street going to open up in SoHo? That's the next thing, right? It's got to be.

[0:18:34.5]

DS: You know, when we can afford it.

[0:18:37.8]

FT: All right, let's talk money. We talked a little bit about money that how you raised capital for your business, but personally, what are your financial philosophies? Dorie, I'll let you go first.

[0:18:48.0]

DS: Yeah. My philosophy is save, save, save, splurge. I've found that I get a lot more joy out of doing anything in a really, really big way than doing a lot of small things. So, for example, I'm

more excited about buying a front row ticket to a concert and have Taylor Swift sweat on me than going to two concerts and sitting in the nosebleeds.

[0:19:11.9]

FT: Yes, so you do allow yourself to enjoy your money after some hard work.

[0:19:15.9]

DS: Yes and I save up until I'm ready to really spend.

[0:19:19.9]

FT: Emelyn, how about you?

[0:19:21.4]

EN: Yeah, one of the thing that I try to live by is not to be an impulsive spender. I have a personal rule or if there's something I'm looking to spend money on or make a purchase on I make myself wait for a week and if I'm still thinking about it and still regretting that I didn't buy it a week later then usually that tells me that that is something that I really need and really wanted and I think it's allowed me to make sure that I am making the right decisions that are actually important to me and not making purchases that are impulsive and that I really don't need.

[0:19:52.2]

FT: That's a really good point. I actually just came across a study that found that we sometimes just fall in love with the idea of having something as opposed to actually needing it, wanting it. Once we own it the fantasy does not get fulfilled and maybe you have found this too with your own store, your online store. I was just looking at some data that looked at online shopping carts and the abandonment rate, which is very high across the eCommerce world. So it's almost 80% of online shopping carts in the last six months were abandoned.

[0:20:31.3]

EN: I am not surprised as we found too that a lot of times customers are doing their browsing online and putting things into their carts online and then they're maybe coming into the store later to actually make that purchase because once they get there then they're deciding something they actually want. So a lot of it is doing the test drive before they actually make the purchase.

[0:20:54.8]

FT: Do a test drive, that's right. You might end up saving yourself a lot of money. What about your childhoods, do you have similar backgrounds when it comes to your economics and your financial perspectives? I'd love for you guys to share each a story maybe that happened in childhood that later as adults really as you reflect on that you think, in hindsight, "That was really a pivotal moment for me, financially."

[0:21:21.4]

EN: Sure, this is Emelyn speaking and I'm from Michigan, a suburban town called Ben Rapids and one thing that I was remembering was that when I was little I used to always set up stands in front of my driveway and I would sell anything. I would sell lemonade, I would sell friendship bracelets that I made and I still could remember one day I had a friend over and she was complaining that all I wanted to ever do was set up stands and sell stuff.

It sort of made me wonder, "What was I doing it for?" and looking back I realized it wasn't really about just amassing pocket change for my own spending, but I really enjoyed the actual process of selling something that people liked and I enjoyed the experience of talking to people and giving them something that they wanted and I think that was really important for starting Of Mercer.

It's not just about — money isn't fulfilling itself but making sure that you are earning in a way that is fulfilling and for me it's not just making money but knowing that I am making products people want and that's what makes me happy and driven to earn.

[0:22:29.3]

FT: Wow, that's a great story and clearly you had entrepreneurial tendencies as a child.

[0:22:35.4]

EN: Yeah, they were always there.

[0:22:36.6]

FT: They were always there so Dorie how about you?

[0:22:39.4]

DS: Yeah, so I actually grew up in New York City in Manhattan. So Emelyn and I have very similar values but our childhoods definitely looked a little bit different. I didn't have stands, I have seen stands in Manhattan but not when I was growing up in the 80's and New York wasn't as good. So the first memory I have where I thought about what it meant to save and to spend was when I bought a birthday present for my mom.

I was about six or seven, one of my very earliest memories and I had two dollars and I don't even know where that came from. Maybe the tooth fairy or something, and my dad took me down to the card store in our apartment building and I bought one of those cheesy "World's Best Mom" mugs and I gave the salesman the two dollars and I got 25 cents back and my dad looks at me and goes, "Okay and now there's the beginning of your new savings."

And it struck me how quickly that money went away and how hard it was to really amass it overtime. So granted I was talking about 25 cents and two dollars but it took me a long time to get there and it was so fast for it to go away and I think it was a valuable present sentimentally and if my mom hadn't recently Marie Condo-ed her apartment, she probably would still have it and it wouldn't be worth as much.

[0:24:03.9]

FT: She didn't keep the mug? Come on.

[0:24:05.4]

DS: You know, it didn't spark joy.

[0:24:07.9]

FT: No, it didn't spark joy. How old were you then?

[0:24:11.0]

DS: I'm guessing six or seven.

[0:24:13.4]

FT: It was quite the observation six or seven.

[0:24:15.8]

DS: Yeah, it was a bit of bummer to only have a quarter.

[0:24:19.7]

FT: But did it make you want to then quickly replenish?

[0:24:22.8]

DS: Yeah, I think it just goes back to this save, save, save, splurge thing that I have as my ethos of it takes a while but then it's worth it in the end.

[0:24:31.3]

FT: What about your failures? And this you can pull from your lives as an entrepreneurs or also your personal financial experiences. What's been a hard lesson that you've learned?

[0:24:44.1]

EN: Sure, this is Emelyn talking. I'm talking about something on the personal front. I think one thing that I did very poorly was transitioning from the corporate world where I was earning money in finance into back to business school where I wasn't earning money and I think I was basically spending the same and living the same similar lifestyles I was when I was in finance and I sort of knew that I shouldn't be spending that way, but I avoided having to a set of budget and readjust my lifestyle and having to make sacrifices longer than it should.

It definitely took more of my bank account than I should have let it for me to readjust and I think it's really actually about making sure that you're facing the hard stuff sooner and what I found that making that lifestyle change to reset your budget and things that you are worth spending on isn't as hard as it seems; it's just easier to do it earlier than later.

[0:25:39.0]

FT: Fail early and fail a lot when you have less in stake, yeah. For sure. Dorie how about you?

[0:25:46.5]

DS: So here's an Of Mercer one; one of the things that we have to spend a lot of money on and invest in as an eCommerce company is photography. So every time we do a photoshoot there are a million things to pay for; models, props, hair, make up, equipment, studio, a photographer. So it gets very expensive very quickly and one of our early photoshoots we met a photographer. I think we found her on Craigslist or something and her portfolio online was good. Definitely good enough and she said "I have a friend who has a studio, we could use it for free."

So she gave us an unbelievable deal, she basically worked for nothing, had a free studio so we're like, "Great, here we go." So the day of the shoot we get to this "studio" and it's a shoe factory like a literal shoe factory in New York City that had a wall that we ended up using as the backdrop and it was probably the most uncomfortable day we've had while working at this company.

It was dusty, it smelled funny, there's shoe polish everywhere and the worst part of it was the photos came out pretty subpar, more than subpar and we ended up having to re-shoot everything, rehire the models, rehire hair and makeup, find a new photographer, find new props, find new equipment and we ended up spending twice as much or almost twice as much as we would have had we done it right the first time and that's something we've learned is that if it seems too good to be true it probably is. So it's worth not risking that.

[0:27:32.6]

FT: Yeah in hindsight, what due diligence would you have done that you didn't do?

[0:27:37.8]

DS: I think we would have gotten more information about the photographer. So now we use all of our contacts in the fashion world to really make sure we have references for photographers and we don't just hire them based on an online portfolio. We would have scouted the site to make sure that we were comfortable there, that it was a good place for us to be branding our clothes and we basically wouldn't do half the same things as we did that shoot.

[0:28:05.7]

FT: Well okay, So Money moment, maybe you have a shared one for the business?

[0:28:09.3]

EN: Yeah. Well, actually one of our So Money moments was the very first time that we got outside funding for Of Mercer. It was while we were at Wharton and we were part of the

Wharton Veteran Initiation Program and we won what was called the Schneider Sneed Venture Award and it was only \$2,500 but for us it was just so meaningful that someone besides ourselves is willing to invest in our idea and give us money for it that it was really validating to have that and have someone show us that.

[0:28:47.5]

DS: And I'm sure you hear this all the time, but they were men that we were pitching to, you know, that's again a problem. But convincing men that this is the best venture at Wharton to invest in and to women's clothing really was So Money for us.

[0:29:05.3]

FT: What are your habits? Do each of you have a financial habits? I know with the whole save-save-save-splurge approach Dorie to your finances, is there a habit that you practice to make sure that that actually can happen?

[0:29:17.4]

DS: Yeah, I think on the same lines I bring my lunch to work most days and that helps me not to spend that medium amount on a meal that I'm not going to think about ever again. So I always add avocado to everything so a chopped salad would cost me \$15 everyday and to me that's not worth it if I could save up that \$15 for five days in a week and spend it on a real dining experience at a great restaurant. So bringing lunch, to me, has made quite a bit of difference.

[0:29:48.8]

FT: Yeah, I'm impressed. An entrepreneur who brings her lunch her work, that's a pretty good story.

[0:29:53.8]

DS: To be honest, sometimes it's a frozen Amy's meal from Wholefoods. So I'm not cooking necessarily.

[0:30:00.1]

FT: Listen, you're talking to the girl who lived off of Subway sandwiches for half of her 20's and even still I have a soft spot in my heart for Subway sandwiches.

[0:30:08.7]

DS: That smell.

[0:30:10.3]

FT: And I don't even go for the big deal. I just get like the veggie subs and I think it's just nostalgic at this point. Emelyn how about you, what's a habit?

[0:30:21.1]

EN: One of the thing that I do to really face my fears is I always find myself wanting to avoid logging on to my bank account to check my balance to pay a bill or whatever it was. So I basically force myself to deal with it by setting up an alert from my bank account. So once a week I basically get a mobile text that says like, "Your balance is ____." and it's really a way to make sure that I am keeping tabs on my finances and forcing myself to do it that doesn't require a log in and a password but it's really there for me and it forces me to make sure I'm on top of things.

[0:30:56.1]

FT: Let's do some So Money fill-in-the-blanks really quick. You ladies have been great sports throughout this interview, so let's finish it off on a light note. So whoever wants to jump in first feel free to finish the sentence: If I won the lottery tomorrow — maybe you'll learn a lot about each other, by the way, through this process.

[0:31:12.4]

DS: I don't think that's possible at this point.

[0:31:15.2]

FT: You're like, "I know too much about Emelyn."

[0:31:17.9]

EN: [Inaudible].

[0:31:21.4]

FT: All right, if I won the lottery tomorrow, let's say \$100 million, the first thing I would do is

_____.

[0:31:26.9]

EN: I would buy an apartment.

[0:31:29.2]

DS: I would take the team Of Mercer on a fabulous trip.

[0:31:33.7]

FT: Would you invite Emelyn to that trip because apparently she's going on her own vacation?

[0:31:37.5]

DS: She'll be in her new apartment.

[0:31:38.6]

FT: Oh okay. Right, she's going to buy an apartment. One thing I spend on that makes my life easier or better is ____.

[0:31:46.1]

EN: It's Emelyn; Seamless for dinner. It's just so quick and easy.

[0:31:51.3]

DS: I am a Rent the Runway unlimited member and it's my jam. I get all these super trendy expensive things that I don't have to buy and won't have to worry about reselling next season.

[0:32:03.9]

FT: Do you have enough places to go to wear this things at?

[0:32:06.8]

DS: Well, like for example right now I have this amazing Elizabeth and James leopard print coat. So it's my outer wear for the season.

[0:32:14.0]

FT: Oh so they're not just doing that for evening gowns and stuff.

[0:32:17.7]

DS: No actually you could get Of Mercer on Rent the Runway. So you can rent your work clothes as well.

[0:32:23.3]

FT: Oh that's a great idea. Okay I'll have to check that out. Thanks for giving me one more thing to spend my money on. By the way Seamless, I have to cut back. It's ridiculous, for those of you who aren't from New York listening to the show, Seamless is our all too easy website that lets us order from basically all of our neighborhood favorite joints and you put in your credit card and it includes tip and everything and it's just basically click and your food arrives.

And you don't have to have cash and it's just too gosh darn easy to the point where one year I was looking at my year to date spending, guess what the number two category after housing was? Food, and a lot of that food was Seamless. So Seamless is getting a lot of my income.

[0:33:12.0]

EN: Right, mine too. I spend too many days hangry in the grocery store trying to figure out what I was going to make for dinner and this was so easy to not think about it and just press that button.

[0:33:22.3]

FT: Hangry is the worst.

[0:33:23.3]

EN: It's the worst.

[0:33:25.0]

FT: All right, one thing I splurge on, what is it, the best splurge you've got?

[0:33:29.8]

DS: Manicures.

[0:33:31.2]

FT: Yeah.

[0:33:31.8]

EN: Barry's Boot Camp Workout classes.

[0:33:34.2]

FT: Oh yeah, those are expensive. What \$35 a pop?

[0:33:37.2]

EN: Yes they are and there's no discount for buying in bulk.

[0:33:40.2]

FT: They seem like places like Soul Cycle they don't care. Your loyalty means nothing to them.

[0:33:46.6]

DS: No.

[0:33:48.6]

FT: Give us your money, bitches.

[0:33:51.0]

EN: I'm doing it so.

[0:33:52.8]

FT: Yeah, right. Okay one thing I wish I had learned about money growing up is _____.

[0:33:57.8]

EN: For me it's that everything is pretty much negotiable. Usually, whether you're looking for us at Of Mercer, whether it's a photographer or a model or whatever it is, a quoted price is really about — certainly it can be negotiated and can work both sides. If they're willing to work with startup and want to work with us and we have a budget, there's just a lot of flexibility there.

[0:34:21.1]

DS: Mine is about investing in education. So I always knew that “I should invest in my education” but when I was an undergrad, I didn't really know what that meant so I went to classes and then I did well enough and then I had fun with my friends. Going back to grad school I think I really thought more about what it meant to be investing in my education and what it meant to be on a university campus and surrounded by such brilliant minds who are so willing to help and be involved. So I think I got a lot more out of grad school than I did necessarily at Princeton in undergrad.

[0:34:58.6]

FT: Well I think that's true for a lot of people that go to grad school. I mean that's an experience in your life that you've now consciously made the choice to focus on something very specific and a lot of us pay for our own way through grad school so it's more meaningful in that sense too. So I think a lot of people would relate to that.

I know I certainly could relate when I went to journalism school. I finally felt that I discovered my academic calling and then obviously my professional calling too. All right ladies here's your So Money moment, tell us, I'm So Money because _____.

[0:35:31.3]

DS: Can we have the same one?

[0:35:32.3]

FT: Yeah, sure but you have to say it together in sync. No, I'm kidding.

[0:35:37.1]

DS: We could do that. We're So Money because we started a successful company that helps empower working women.

[0:35:43.3]

FT: I love it. You have, and congratulations and it's just the beginning. So we look forward to seeing how 2017 shapes out for the two of you and like I said, once I'm back to my normal size I look forward to test driving your clothes and wishing you a great rest of your year. Thanks a lot.

[0:36:05.3]

DS & EN: Thanks for having us.

[END]