

**EPISODE 457**

[SPONSOR MESSAGE]

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FT:

[INTRODUCTION]

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**FT:** Welcome to So Money everyone. I'm your host Farnoosh Torabi, thanks for joining. We've heard so much about the importance of sleep lately. Earlier this summer I had on Arianna Huffington and of course she is all about the #sleeprevolution. She is on a mission to get us to get our eight hours in and thanks to her, sleep has become a new trending topic.

Today I have another sleep coach joining us because I think there's so much we can learn about the benefits of sleep and how it can positively impact business, finances, relationships. Christine Hansen is here, all the way from Luxemburg and last year, she left a career in education and now coaches successful and career driven women, men on how to get a solid night's sleep.

Her approach involves no medication and she really wants to work to address the whole picture, not just one piece of the puzzle. She's an international expert and has been featured in a number of publication including the Huffington post. How does more sleep actually lead to more money? How can we get more sleep once and for all? And do the rich have an easier time packing in those precious eight hours of sleep?

Here is Christine Hansen.

[INTERVIEW]

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**FT:** Christine Hansen, welcome to So Money, all the way from Luxemburg.

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**CH:** Hi. I'm so happy to be here. Yes, Luxemburg.

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**FT:** Yes, I was just telling you before we went on the podcast that — so you're in Luxemburg, I think maybe the furthest out I've interviewed somebody who is at Australia. I think maybe someone was in Germany or Poland. So I love having some international people on the show and, are you from that area or did you land there for work, for life?

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**CH:** It's difficult. I was adopted when I was four months old. So I was born in Columbia that actually bred completely in Luxemburg. So I've lived there all my life, I went abroad to study in the UK for four years and traveled a lot but yeah. It's like my home.

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**FT:** I learned something new that the language of Luxemburg is called Luxemburgish.

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**CH:** Yes it is. People always have like huge eyes when I say that, but that's our national spoken language, yeah.

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**FT:** Does it sound like French or German?

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**CH:** It does more like German. So sometimes when I explain it, it's like you have German and Dutch, they kind of sound alike, it's different. So it sounds more German than French

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**FT:** Wow, I'm so impressed. I want to learn more languages but I don't have enough time but maybe if I got more sleep I could increase my productivity...

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**CH:** Absolutely.

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**FT:** ...and be better at remembering things. That brings us to your expertise Christine which is that you are sort of the sleep whisperer. Your site is called [Sleeplikeaboss.com](http://Sleeplikeaboss.com) and I want to know how you got interested in this area. I understand you worked with families who were sleep deprived after having new borns. I've been there. But how did you ultimately developed this corner of expertise for yourself?

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**CH:** Yeah, so I have two businesses, Sleep Like a Boss and Sleep Like a Baby and it's basically, I love sleep, I really do. It's like my one thing I know that I can function and that I'm a horrible person if I don't sleep. When I had my daughter when I was pregnant and I was like huge, that's when people came up to me and they would say these typical phrases like, "Get some sleep now, you will never sleep again," and they say it with a smile, but it freaked me out. It completely freaked me out.

When I had my leave to have my baby, I had the best time because I had, fortunately, a really good pregnancy. I could sleep in every morning and the more I did that, the more I started to think like, "You can never do this again, your life will be over, you will never sleep, you will never have this feeling again," and it really — I really panicked. So I did what every good mom does and I asked Google. Google came up with a zillion gazillion sites but what I did learn was there was such a thing that's a baby sleep consultant.

That profession doesn't exist like in Luxemburg at all and in Europe, it's very rare. I did find some help there and then it stayed in my mind but I was working as an English teacher for nine years. So a very typical government job and I studied English literature with the masters and children's literature. So I always called that my Mickey Mouse degree because I knew that I wanted to do something else but I really didn't know what.

In December 2014, I had — my cousin, he was 23 years old, he had a heart attack and he died like in a second. That was really my wakeup call and then Facebook and its magic came, it showed me an ad because it read my mind obviously about sleep consultants who you could send in your candidacy and I thought, "Okay, this is actually something I really want to do."

The more you start to talk with moms, the more you get to know them and the more you get to hear how less sleep they got. Because I had such a positive experience, I thought, "Okay." So I started out with that and the more I tell people, the more I was

asked, “Well do you do that with adults too?” At the beginning I said, “No, I’m not really interested in that,” but after a while, I just said, “Actually yes, why not?”

So I really got even more into sleep because it’s two different things when you work with — there are similarities but they are very different elements to working with adults and working with babies and toddlers. I was very fortunate to be in a course that was very inclusive and really looked all the different aspects that could affect sleep and how you can deal with it and I love it. I am a huge fan of sleep and its complexities and the people I work with. It’s my absolute passion to see how it can change everything, really everything.

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**FT:** You see the way babies have such difficulty sleeping through the night in the beginning. I wonder, do we enter the world as human beings good at sleeping? We have to work at it, we have to be trained.

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**CH:** Yeah, it makes difference. It’s very different and that’s why I’m saying, no two parents have the same experience because some might have a baby that’s just naturally has an easy time connecting different sleep cycles and hence the term “sleep through the night”. Even though they do wake up but it’s just easier for them to fall asleep again and other babies just need help doing that.

There has been some research that says, if you have, there are some people just also as adults have difficulties falling back asleep. So you can teach or you can show them and guide them towards doing that in an easier way or to help them. But it’s definitely something that sometimes it’s just you have a baby that sleeps well or you have a baby that doesn’t sleep well. So sometimes it’s just not there.

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**FT:** What keeps us up as adults? When I was a kid, I'll tell you, I hated sleeping and this was when I was five, six, seven, I had a fear of missing out, FOMO. I was an only child, my parents usually had friends over on the weekends, they would stay up late, I wanted to stay up late and even now, I'm such a night owl. My husband knows this well because he's usually the one getting up early in the morning to get us going. I could sleep — I love sleeping in. What is it that you find is common and in keeping us from really getting the sleep that we need?

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**CH:** It's very tricky. I always say, if it's not medical, sleep is really for everyone as unique as your fingerprint. So there's so many different things that can affect it. The way I explain it is that if you are someone who has a lot of trouble sleeping, you cannot control sleep, which I think is what infuriates you so because you want to sleep sometimes and you just can't. Sleep is really something you cannot just grab it and say, "Okay, I put it on myself and it will work." Even with sleep medicine, like sleeping pills, it will not give you the same effect.

So if you look at it like a puzzle, the moulds has to really fit in order to have the piece of the puzzle really match it really well. In order to do that, you kind of have to do different things. I always start with inner work usually, I always start from the inside and see what's been going on? Is it something, is it really FOMO? Is very often the case. Are you stressed about something? Is it something maybe a perception that you have a bad sleep. Like a lot of people don't like sleeping, they feel really uncomfortable because they kind of lose control. It can be from an anxious point of view.

It can also be something like lots of people have, all of this thoughts racing in like at 3 AM especially if they wake up, you have this wave of thoughts crashing down on you and then we look out what this thoughts are, can we do something about them? Then

you have lots of exterior factors, it can be related to your nutrition, it can be related to your hydration, to your movement, to how you live, what your environment looks like or what your work environment looks like. So it's really a lot of profiling is connected to all of this. It's really interesting, it's very, very interesting

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**FT:** Yeah, and what your work is probably getting a lot of even a heightened interest now. There's a lot of discussion globally now, for the first time in a long time I think, happening around the importance of sleep. We've gone so long without it and it's been something that I think a lot of us wears a badge of honor.

You know, "I only need four hours of sleep, I can get off with just five hours of sleep." I used to envy those people because I can't do that, I wished I could but what happened in our culture where suddenly we thought, we stop and said, "Wait a minute, this isn't actually very healthy." Why is the paradigm shifting?

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**CH:** I think you have a couple of sleep advantages like Arianna Huffington, who you had on your show. I think she's doing a tremendous job on doing that, on waking people up to sleep. Also I think that we are slowly starting to hit a wall where numbers can't lie. We have so much burn out going on or also something that is called "bored out" is a new thing. What people are bored out of their minds because they aren't interested in anything anymore because they also tie it and I think we all start going back to looking at ourselves. Whether it is through sleep, whether it is through health and nutrition.

You can see that every — even like strict business magazines, stats you have more and more articles about how you as a human have to be fit in order to produce the best results you can and sleep is just something that you cannot neglect if you look at

yourself, at your body and your physical and at your mental health and speed and cleverness and everything is connected.

So I think that's why sleep is suddenly starting to come back into the discussion because there's just so much science and research and facts that also tell you, "Look, it's not clever what you're doing," and in the end, that's what is interesting for people. "Am I clever enough, am I producing the results, am I making enough money in the end? Is my relationship working?" If you look at yourself, it's one of the most important factors in there.

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**FT:** One of the questions I asked Arianna was, do you think that sleep is something we can democratize? Because there are a lot of critics out there who say that to get the eight hours, you need to have the time and the resources. But if you are a single parent working two shifts that it's more difficult for you, arguably. What's interesting is that you're working with a lot of high net worth people, bosses. So in your experience, do you think that it's more challenging for someone with fewer resources, not as much money and who works harder during the day, more hours to find the appropriate time to sleep?

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**CH:** I think it is. I don't want to be too optimistic in a way that I think it is more difficult. Even though sleep is free, theoretically, if you put it like that. I do think that it can be much more challenging if you are a single parent. Having said that though, I do know people who are in that situation and who had to force themselves to take the time, a mom of three children, twins and another child, which she had in one year. You have three kids in one year and a single mom and it was very stressful but at the same time suddenly she had all this energy back and all this clarity that she did prioritize it.

But I do think it's definitely more difficult for those people to take the time and to do that for others necessarily. So I hope that this change in thinking that the result and the reward or the change in energy and everything that you gain is much bigger but it is difficult. So it's not really fare. That's very true.

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**FT:** I do hear from some serial entrepreneurs that sleep is overrated, that we live in this culture now where everybody wants to work for themselves, start a business, at least that's my perspective. Not everybody but I feel there's a movement happening, which is very exciting on the one hand but also I think it comes with a cost. You feel like you have to work really hard and fast and long to accomplish your goals and even someone like, you know, I just followed around Gary Vanerchuk for example who is in America, he is a serial entrepreneur, has a rabid following of fans, people want to be just like him and he has said, "I'll sleep when I die."

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**CH:** Yeah.

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**FT:** And he's joking, I'm sure he wouldn't say, "Don't sleep," but I think that we say this things and it becomes part of the culture and I think that we need to be more careful when we say this things.

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**CH:** Yeah, also I think you always have to consider that there are awesome people who need less sleep and that's like...

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**FT:** Is that true though? Yeah? You think that some people are just hard wired to not need as much sleep?

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**CH:** I think that speeds the whole and less than others, yes. I think it's rare that you have someone who can consistently get by four, five hours of sleep. I think it's rare but eight hours is, it's not for everyone. That's actually something that I do tell some of my clients when you start, because they are so stressed about getting those eight hours that it puts even more stress on them.

It's one of the things that I like about the sleep trend that it's telling you how important it is but it's also stressing people out. Because some people who really have sleep issues, they know that they are tired and that they can't sleep. So hearing over and over again that they need these strict eight hours, it's just waking them up at night and it makes it a really tough time for them to even go to sleep.

So I think that people who do need less sleep, a lot less sleep, is very rare but I do think that some people are in that situation and if those are very successful and if they say that as an example then obviously a lot of people who need more sleep and who think it are like kind of confirmed. But at the same time, there are so many, like most of their successful professionals who you ask, they all value their sleep and you had your episode of the "health is wealth" for example.

If you listen to those amazing entrepreneurs, loads of them value their sleep and say that's one of the most important things that they need. Even actually the people that I work with, they know, they come to me because they know they need to sleep in order to be a better leader, in order to think clearer, also because sometimes they have a strained relationship and everything is connected to it.

So I think the shift is going to come because more people also talk about it. It's still something that a lot of people don't talk about and when somebody barges in and says exactly as you said, "I was here until two in the morning and I was back at seven." I think that the times are going to change when someone is going to say well that wasn't very clever. So hopefully it will come, but it will take time.

[SPONSOR BREAK]

[0:18:54.1]

**FT:** Can I ask you? How are you sleeping? We work hard all day and I know I look forward to getting my rest after a long day of meetings and business calls. That's why I'm excited to tell you about my latest sponsor, Casper Mattress. A brand sold directly to consumers. What does that mean for you? It means you can get the Casper, an obsessively engineered mattress that's made in America at a shockingly fair price.

Casper combines Springy latex and supported memory foams to create an award winning sleep surface with just the right sink and just the right bounce. Time Magazine named it one of the best inventions of 2015 and Casper shipped directly to you for free, in the US and Canada, returns are free too.

You can try it for 100 nights free in your own home. If you don't love it, they'll pick it up and refund everything. If you go to [Casper.com/somoney](http://Casper.com/somoney) and use my code, "Somoney", you'll even get \$50 off any mattress purchase. Try Casper today for 100 nights in your own home and get \$50 toward any mattress purchase by visiting [Casper.com/somoney](http://Casper.com/somoney) and using my code, "Somoney".

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

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**FT:** Is there some common advice for everybody? If there's someone listening, who wants us to just get a good night's sleep tonight and for whatever reason they've been struggling, what are some best practices to make sure that you're getting, if not more sleep, you're getting quality sleep?

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**CH:** It's tricky because you do have tons of advice. Like proper sleep hygiene. So that works and so that's what I go for if somebody asks me. For me, my top advice is really to not stress about it. Really, if you are someone who knows, "I don't speak very well." The first thing I would tell you is, "So what?" Don't go to bed already with the thought, "Oh, it's going to be a horrible night and everything is going to be horrible the next day." So what?

You had tons of bad night apparently, you survived the next day and imagine the worst night ever and you still made it work the next day. So I think that already takes so much stress off. It's like, "Oh, okay." Then the next tip really is what lots of people do when they wake up. They lie there and it's really like pinching your eyes and you're like, "Okay, sleep now come, I'm ready, I'm here, I'm waiting." That's really to just get up.

If you're in bed and you notice it's just sleep has changed its mind, it's not going to come, just get up and do something different. Usually I suggest doing something very boring like for me, I absolutely hate household work. I'm not a very good housekeeper, really not. So something that I could do for example is folding the laundry or ironing because it will focus you without over exciting you but at the same time it will not allow you to have all this thoughts pushing down on you. Then when you feel tired again, just try again. These are two things that I really like.

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**FT:** Yeah, those are — everyone can do those things, they don't require lots of money like there are other things too, like black out shades which I just paid for, which were not cheap. Arianna likes fancy lingerie and incense and things like that. What is the research show about monitoring your phone and being on your laptop right before bed? That blue light, does that impact your brainwaves as you're sleeping?

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**CH:** It does impact your melatonin. So let's talk about that for a second. Basically your body prepares itself to sleep by creating a hormone called melatonin. Well it's not really creating it, it's in your body before but it's transformed into melatonin. Now blue light is general all around there, it's basically why the sky is blue, that's also blue light, but that's our natural blue light. Artificial blue light is, it has shorter wavelengths so it's very intense on the retina of your eyes.

So it's just biological, if your eyes are hit by this blue light, it interferes with the production of melatonin and that's why it's more difficult for you to sleep. Now, again, having said that, that's the way it is but different people react differently to blue light. You have some people who will have no trouble at all to look at the screen, close it and go to sleep.

But other people are much more sensitive to it. It's definitely, it can be one of the things that interferes with you sleeping. Definitely. Also people then think, "Okay, I'm just going to not do that stuff anymore and everything will be fine," when it could actually be one of many different things interfering with your sleep.

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**FT:** Makes sense. Yeah, I have this bad habit of playing on my iPhone just like stupid games on my crossword puzzles or something. I love any kind of word games but it

actually puts me to sleep because my eyes get tired and I just literally have to — I just crash after like one or two games.

So it has its pros and cons, I guess. I read on your website that productivity loss due to sleep deprivation is estimated at almost \$2,000 per employee annually. So that makes a very strong case for companies to encourage their employees to have more balance I think in their lives. In your practice, how have you seen more sleep correlate to wealth?

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**CH:** I'm actually working with someone who is leading a very big team basically. She has a big company and for her, the click moment was when people told her, "You know, you're doing so many things but you're not necessarily doing them very well. That was really like she was incredibly hurt by then. Then she took a step back and she had really realized that she had kind of lost touch with her team even though she's a very open person and just a lovely person but she was so tired and so stressed that she had just lost touch and she just snapped at people.

So the person she was most annoyed with was actually herself because she knew, "I know that I'm not very open and friendly to it." So when we started to work on her sleep and she just realized she got so much more patient and listened differently a little bit and it led her to make different decisions for her business that have allowed her to open up a new business that is the dream that she had for a long time and the communication, everything has been going very well and it's just — she said it was just on a different level of how she did things before.

So I think that was for her a point of view from people leading the other people. But I think if the same is true that if you are someone who is working a lot and you just feel uncomfortable that you might just over look a lot of things and once you start to be more focused, you can actually provide results that will impress people a lot more than if you deliver some reports that have some crucial flaws in them.

That's also that sometimes startups are being criticized for.

There was an article in the guardian that looked at startups and said that at some point, the CEO's do so many mistakes or just they don't see so many red flags because they had to be so high on the process of creating, they have neglected sleep and somehow it just affected their judgment and their whole cognitive strength basically. So they talk about that and I thought that was really interesting too because I can completely relate to that as an entrepreneur. I would love to do different things if you're meant to go to bed, it's difficult for me to stop. But at the same time, I really know, "Okay, you don't want to fall into the trap of not seeing red flags popping up here and there."

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**FT:** Do you have to get all your sleep at night or can you break it up throughout the day and do you recommend that with for some clients who have crazy schedules?

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**CH:** Yeah, that trend is definitely here in Luxembourg too. I know that's some very big companies had some chill zones as well. One had caused it down because nobody would go there because of the perception, "I can't take a nap if everyone else is working." So there's still a lot of work to do. However when I am being asked for that is to do sessions on power naps. That's something that I think can work.

I don't in general recommend naps to people who have a lot of sleep issues at first but I do really enjoy a power nap or at least some conscious deep sleep to where you meditate yourself into a state that is similar to sleep for like 30 to 40 minutes. That's something that I really do like and I personally, I do need naps too. So I think it's something you can do but you really have to observe yourself.

If you're someone who takes a nap and then you know that you cannot sleep well then obviously it's not something you should do. I do think that people who do have crazy schedules, it can really help. But again, you need to be confident enough and your company needs to really support the idea that nobody who is going to take a nap is going to be "the lazy one".

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**FT:** Thank you for saying that because I feel like I — I don't know, with getting older and now I'm being a mom and I've been so tired and part of me wonders, like maybe I'm low on iron? How do you evaluate yourself to know that your tiredness is not something that is serious that maybe just means that you do need more sleep?

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**CH:** Theoretically it's easy to do because we are very good at recuperating from a sleep debt. So if you consistently get not enough sleep for what you need, you basically collect a sleep debt, which is making you feel constantly tired. But our body is very good at recuperating.

So let's say if you have a weekend where you can ship your children off to someone else and have a good lie in and you feel great afterwards then it would mean that you're just consistently not getting enough sleep. But if you even sleep in and you should really feel well rested and you feel really tired and you have that over a couple of days, that's really when I'd look into seeing if something's going on.

So when I work with clients, I actually have them go to the doctor's and show me the blood work just to rule that out. Sometimes that can be a reason. But in general, your body is very good at telling you and because we're able to recuperate so quickly, it's not too difficult to find out sometimes.

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**FT:** Before we go, and this has been so interesting, I have a personal question for you. So you mentioned earlier how you were a teacher and it was a very standard government job and now you're transitioning into entrepreneurship. What has been the best thing and the most difficult thing about the transition?

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**CH:** Oh yes, the best thing is that I'm home in a way, you know? As soon as I started, there was something born inside of me like it's so tacky to say but there was a fire born in me that I'd never had before. Maybe as a student for one or two projects but never like that. Thinking that I can do this my life for myself it's just, it felt so right and I'm so much happier and I think the most obvious sign is that I don't have a Monday morning anymore. The typical, "Ugh it's Monday."

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**FT:** Or the Sunday night blues.

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**CH:** Exactly. I just don't have that anymore and that's incredible, it's such a luxury. I can't believe that I managed to do this. The most difficult thing though is that I can do it because of my husband because he really — I mean, he's just the best but that dependency, tricky. So that's something that I had to let myself do in a way and I still, you know, the goal has always been to allow him if you work half time or to help me in my business.

So I really had to focus on that goal sometimes in order not to say, "Okay, I'm just going to go back and earn my salary," but I can't do that. I really can't, it's not an option. So I

would have to find some different. That was something, that was hard and also doing all the work on myself because before when I just had a salary trickling in, I never really thought about myself that much. I just lived kinder and I think when you're an entrepreneur, especially if you work with services and you have to know who you are in order to present yourself, you have to deal with yourself first. That's a lot of stuff coming up. But it's the best experience that I've had and I think I know myself more now than I ever really did before.

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**FT:** Christine, thank you so much. I know you have dedicated a special website for our listeners, [Sleeplikeaboss.com/somoney](http://Sleeplikeaboss.com/somoney). So everybody go there and there's a free gift, you can learn how to train your brain and your head can hit the pillow a little sooner and faster tonight and that you can wake up recharged and of course that can lead to a more productive and a more fulfilled, a happier and more conscious life. Thank you so much Christine and wishing you all the best.

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**CH:** Thank you so much for having me Farnoosh, it was a blast. It was great.

[END]