

EPISODE 528

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:35.0]

FT: You're listening to So Money, everyone. Welcome back. I'm your host, Farnoosh Torabi. As you know, if you've been listening to the show for a while, that I and a lot of listeners were all obsessed here with young retirees on So Money and so when I read about today's guest I booked her immediately.

Kristy Shen is here and she believes to be Canada's youngest retiree calling it quits from her 9 to 5 along with her husband, Bryce, at just 31 years old. Today, they're travelling the world with a million dollars in the bank, which is earning interest. We're gonna talk about the financial workings, the inner financial workings of their early retirement strategy. How much do they save? How much were they earning? How they invested their money? And how much they're really living off of now?

Also, they have no plans to ever make more money, which I was surprised about. I mean, you're in your 30s, you have a long life ahead of you. A million dollars is only gonna get you so far, but you'll be interested to hear their strategy. Here's Kristy Shen.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:01:36.0]

FT: Kristy Shen, welcome to So Money. Early retiree — I think you might even be a record early retiree.

[0:01:44.5]

KS: Yeah. As far as I know, I'm the youngest retiree in Canada.

[0:01:48.3]

FT: How do you know that?

[0:01:49.6]

KS: Because the last person that said they're the youngest retiree is Derek Foster and he retired at the age of 34, I believe so.

[0:01:56.8]

FT: All right. So this bags the question; what does retirement mean to you? I mean, obviously this is an ever changing concept and we've interviewed many people on this show who are self-entitled retirees, you know, in their 30's, in their 40's, and they're still kind of working but they found a way to just sort of work for themselves. How do you ultimately define retirement for yourself and also you're married — Bryce right?

[0:02:23.5]

KS: Yes, that's my husband. So the way I define retirement now is retirement — It's actually retiring from the 9 to 5. I mean, there's a lot of like what Money Mustache calls like the internet retirement police who will like come and say, "Oh! You gotta be sitting on a beach," and that's the only way you can retire. You could do anything, like if you'd just touch the keyboard or do anything then you're not retired. That is not really the true definite definition of retirement anymore. The way that I define it is retiring from your 9 to 5. It means you have — You don't need to work anymore because the passive income from your portfolio pays for your living expenses so you can actually choose to work or not to work at that point.

[0:03:02.0]

FT: Was this always a goal for you? How are you inspired to pursue this path?

[0:03:07.7]

KS: Actually, no. It actually came about the opposite of what I was originally trying to do which was, buy a house. Back in 2012, me and Bryce were actually looking for a house in Toronto because that was the responsible thing to do and everybody else was buying a house. We were thinking, “Okay, we have to buy a house,” and that’s part of the reason why we saved 500,000 back then in 2012 ‘cause we knew that the housing market in Toronto was crazy. It’s one of the most expensive housing markets in Canada so we tried to save as much money as possible.

But at that point, we started looking around at houses and then this one house on our block, it looked really dilapidated, there were some really scary things, sketchy things going on in that house. Like, one day, we walked by and we found like 6-foot deep holes in the front yard and I really didn’t know what was going on I was like, “Okay. I’m just gonna walk really fast past this house and pretend I didn’t see it.”

What was really surprising with that — That house actually went up for sale and sold for 500,000 just in that condition and then a real estate developer moved in, slap some paint on it and then resold it for 800,000 within 2 months. At that point, I started to realize that, like, “Wait a minute. This is a scam. People are not buying houses logically anymore. They’re just trying to get into the housing market and they don’t care whether it’s been renovated properly or whether the house price makes any sense anymore. People are just getting into the market and not thinking anymore.”

At that point, I just walked away from it. I was like, “Okay. I don’t wanna do this. I don’t wanna be buying a house that I don’t know what’s going on with the foundation competing with other people for offers and then being stuck in my job working to pay off the mortgage.” At that point, I actually discovered Mr. Money Mustache who you’ve actually interviewed before, and I really love that interview. That was awesome.

From that, I checked out his blog, I checked out Jim Collins’ blog who talks about investing, and then combine with that, we hatched this plan to retire by the age of 31, because we realized from calculating our expenses, if we build a one-million dollar portfolio. The dividend — The passive income from that portfolio will be enough to cover our expenses, and by the 4% rule, we can actually retire at that point.

[0:05:19.5]

FT: Take us back to what you were doing. What were your occupations? How much were you making? I'm looking at your website right now at millennial-revolution.com. You actually go through kind of all your budgeting and your categorical spending, your net worth. Throughout this process, I'm noticing your savings rates were well above and beyond the average American savings rate, and probably Canadian savings rate. They're like 52%, 59% saving.

What were you guys making? What were your jobs? Just give us some more color about what was going on as you were doing this?

[0:05:55.8]

KS: Right. We're both computer engineers. One of the advantages we had was that we went to a University that actually had a coop program. One of the things we were able to do was work and go to school at the same time. It stretched out our timeframe from four years to five years, but as a result of coop, we were able to have no student loans by the time we graduated, and when we graduated we had two years of experience and we were able to get into the jobs that we already worked at during coop.

As a result, we made approximately \$60,000 to start after taxes, so that gave us a head start. We also were relatively frugal. Not insanely frugal, 'cause we managed to go on at least two expensive vacation a year, but we did manage to find a one-bedroom apartment on the second floor of a townhouse in an area in Toronto that was less expensive. It's about 30-minute subway ride from downtown, so that made our rent only \$850 a month, which is much lower than what our friends were paying. That helped a lot in terms of savings.

As well, I took — As you see from the blog, initially, we were going out to eat all the time and then we started tracking we started realizing this is a lot of money wasted just going out and drinking and clubbing all the time. Why don't we just start cooking more?"

[0:07:14.3]

FT: But it's so much fun. I'm kidding.

[0:07:16.6]

KS: I know. When you're — Once you get used to it, it's not so much fun. In the beginning, it is quite a lot fun.

[0:07:24.5]

FT: Right. Okay. You made some decent money coming right out of college because of your college's coop program. You didn't have student loans. That's like leaps and bounds ahead of most millennials. You saved more than half of your income, you found affordable rent, you lived relatively frugally although you said you did splurge on things that mattered to you, like vacations. When did you reach that million bucks? By 31?

[0:07:50.9]

KS: Yes. In 2012, once we decided we weren't gonna go down the path of buying a house, we were gonna invest instead. At that point, we continued saving and we continued investing. Part of the investment gains and the savings propelled us to the million dollar portfolio by the end of 2014, at which point I was 31.

[0:08:12.5]

FT: But surely you have to be making more money, right? Because a million dollar sounds like a lot on paper and it is, but for the next 50 years that you're gonna be alive, I don't know if that 4% rule is gonna hold up.

[0:08:24.5]

KS: That's one of the things that we — Yeah, that's a lot of people have been questioning about the 4%. Some people have been able to drop their savings — Drop their spending to 3%, which

gives you 100% success rate. What we did was, actually, we created a backup plan; plan A, B, C. Plan A is that we structured out portfolio so that it is a 60-40 split; 60 equities, 40 fixed income. That portfolio actually gives us a dividend income of approximately 3.4, 2.5%. Because we're able to live under that dividend income, we don't ever have to withdraw from the portfolio at all during down times. That allows us to have 100% success rate, that's plan A.

Plan B, we also keep a cash cushion outside the portfolio covering three to five years of living expenses so that if there is a down market and we can actually live off that income as well. Plan C is because we — Once we started traveling, I realized that traveling is so much cheaper than people actually realize. We were able to travel the world on 40,000 Canadian dollars a year. As a result, we are actually able to move to cheaper places that is not crazy expensive Toronto. Location independence counts a lot as well, that's our Plan C — Is just to move somewhere less expensive and be able to have a safe withdrawal rate of even 2%.

[0:09:42.0]

FT: This is a very much not just a financial shift, but it's a lifestyle shift. For those listening and thinking, "Oh! I wanna do this." What are some of the things that you have to be aware of once you "retire". What are these things that you find are necessary to have in place and also to be comfortable with from a lifestyle perspective? What do you have to give up?

[0:10:04.1]

KS: I think flexibility is a big part of it. I don't think it's so much giving up, it's more like being flexible and then also prioritizing the things that matter and then not caring about the things that don't matter. What I mean by that is after we retired, not being fixed to the fact that like, I have to live in Toronto or I have to live in San Francisco or somewhere really expensive. I'm okay, because were no longer tied to a job. We don't have to stay in expensive cities, we can move to a less expensive place. The fact that we travel the world and it's actually less expensive than being in Toronto, I find that a much better option.

I also found that, actually, people don't realize how much money they're paying to work like, it's ridiculous. How much money you're paying on commuting to work every day? How much money

you have to pay for buying professional clothing and dry cleaning? For people who have kids, how much money they have to pay for daycare and childcare?

One of the things that people don't realize until after they reach higher is that their cost go down, because all those cost that are associated with working completely disappear.

[0:11:04.7]

FT: Right. So now what do your parents think? I know that your mom was very insistent on you becoming a homeowner. What do they think of your lifestyle?

[0:11:12.6]

KS: Okay. There was some butting heads in the beginning, 'cause my mom was really — and my dad too. Coming from an Asian background, for our culture, it's like sacrilegious to not buy a house. That is the responsible thing to do. You must buy a house and it's gonna give you wealth, and that is the Asian belief. When I told my mom that, "Okay, I'm retired now and I'm financially independent," she's like, "So what? You don't have a house. Where's the house. That doesn't make any sense."

There was some butting heads there, but I am happy to report now that we've been retired for about a year and a half now and we travelled the world on \$40,000 and we actually have more money like our — We have like \$27,000 more now than when we left. Now that my parents have seen this, that I'm happy doing the things that I love, I'm traveling the world and I have more money than when I left, they're actually quite relieved and not as terrified as they were before.

My dad actually told me the other day like, "I'm really proud of you," and I was like, "Whoa! Okay." Coming from an Asian parent, that is big. As an Asian parent, you don't tell your kids like you're proud of them otherwise they're gonna stop growing, they're going to stop trying.

[0:12:15.6]

FT: I were a tiger mom.

[0:12:18.4]

KS: Yeah, that was really big for me. I was like, “Really? Wow! I really hit the jackpot that time though.”

[0:12:23.9]

FT: You’re subsisting on 40,000 Canadian dollars more or less a year. What if your family expands? Do you have plans for a family, like having kids? Life evolves. Maybe you’re gonna need to take care of your parents one day; you’ll need to pull out more money. Have you thought about these sort of the swings in your life and the financial implications?

[0:12:47.7]

KS: Yeah. Actually, a lot of people have asked, “Is this possible with kids?” Once you have kids, the costs are gonna go up. We actually met another couple, Jeremy and Winnie, right? At gocurrycracker.com?

[0:13:00.2]

FT: Yep. They’ve been on the show.

[0:13:01.0]

KS: We met them in Thailand. Yeah, the fact that they can travel the world with a child, that’s pretty amazing. The funny thing is Jeremy wrote a post recently about how his kid is actually making him money because he has the childcare credit, and that kids don’t actually cost as much money as people think. It really is this belief that kids are expensive, but in reality, it’s parents that make them expensive.

If we have kids, I don't expect it to really increase our cost by that much and the idea that like — The idea that you're never gonna be able to make any money again after you retire is — There's always gonna be chances to make side income as well as the fact that I found out this statistic recently that the average Canadian household, retiree household has an average income of 42,000 a year and they're doing just fine. Like, this is the average household, right? That's really more than enough.

[0:13:57.5]

FT: You're so young though, Kristy. I have to say, yes, it's cool the travel now, but are you gonna just travel for the next 35 years, 40, 50 years? What's — Have you thought — I get the sense that you're a planner, so what's the plan in terms of keeping yourself busy and growing? 'Cause life is obviously not just about working at a 9 to 5, but when you retire it's this idea that there's a new chapter in your life, but most people arrive there when they're in their 60's, you arrived in your 30's. How many more — What are the different chapters going to look like for you?

[0:14:29.6]

KS: We plan to always include traveling as part of our lifestyle. We could actually end up with a home-based later on if I decide to settle down. I can move to less expensive place in Canada. We could move to Southeast Asia. There are actually a lot of options, right?

Another thing I found out that some days are actually busier after retirement than when we are working, because we have all these opportunities, just like talking to journalists, planning to write a book, quoting for a non-profit. There are actually a lot of opportunities that come around when you don't expect it after you retire.

I really see a lot of opportunity going forward and I see that there's nothing that's — We could end up staying in one place, we could end up traveling. It's like the world is our oyster. We can decide to do whatever it is that we wanna do at that point.

[0:15:15.0]

FT: It helps that you have a partner that's going toe to toe with you on this, Bryce. Did you guys ever have differences over opinions of how to accomplish this, or are you both of the same financial ilk?

[0:15:28.7]

KS: I think it helped a lot that we're both growing in the same direction. When I told him, "Okay, the housing thing, it just does not appeal to me, it seems like it's a scam. It seems I have to work so many years for this." He was really on board. He was like, "That really makes sense. I think freedom is a lot more important than having things than having a house." We're very aligned on that message, so that definitely helps a lot.

I think we don't really have too many agreements. I guess the only agreement every now and then is like, "Okay," — Back then when we were going out and clubbing, he's like spending a lot of money on alcohol and I'm like, "Can we drink at home," and then that was kinda like, "Do we really wanna do that?" Eventually, he came around and we cooked more and stayed at home more, and it really made a big difference and it didn't really changed our lifestyle at all. We didn't really have...

[0:16:13.9]

FT: Yeah. Yeah. Certainly. I wonder, though, how much easier — I would say that what you've done is easy, but how much relatively faster you can become an early retiree in Canada versus the U.S., because of two big things that Canadians get for free. I know you pay for it through your taxes, but there's free education and free healthcare and maybe some other free things that I don't know about, which is why everyone wants to move to where you live. How much did that support your ability to accomplish this, and would you think you would have been able to do it as early as you did if you were living in New York or anywhere in the U.S.?

[0:16:53.2]

KS: We have talked to other retirees, like Justin from Root of Good and he said that — For tuition. I think, for him, he said that he went to a state school. It wasn't actually as expensive as

we thought it was. It was actually pretty comparable to our tuition. I think he also worked and took on jobs during university. There are options as well if you're in the states.

I think for insurance, he was using Obamacare to pay for his insurance needs. I'm not sure going forward what's going to change with that, but he definitely had options as an American as well. It wasn't just, "Only Canadians can do this." The same with Money Mustache, he's also American and living in Colorado.

I think we have the same opportunities. It might be a bit easier because we have healthcare, but I think from the education point of view, a lot of people who went to state schools didn't have crazy expensive debt or tuition as well.

[0:17:44.1]

FT: Yeah, I just rode about this young high school senior who got into all of the Ivy's, including Stanford, and instead going to a state school in Alabama, because that's where he's getting a free ride, he got into the honours program. I think it's such a great story, right?

[0:18:01.8]

KS: I totally agree. I think that whole Ivy League thing is kind of losing its shine, because it's like — at the end of the day, you want to get that job and you don't want to be saddled with debt looking for it. Just 'cause you have an Ivy League university doesn't mean you're going to get high paying job. That's way more practical and I totally agree with that line of thinking.

[0:18:20.3]

FT: Yeah, I'm trying to get him on the show, because I really want to spread that wisdom. I think it's brilliant. I got into some really nice colleges too, but at the end of the day it's like you got to — college is an investment, right? You have to be smart about it.

[0:18:34.0]

KS: But I have a return on investment. Yeah.

[0:18:35.5]

FT: The Stanford Alumni Network is definitely priceless, but you can meet those people in life just through your own networking, your own putting yourself out there. Some people go to Stanford and Harvard and they don't use those resources. It's really just about the individual. This guy in particular who declined all these fabulous offers and went to the state school in Alabama, he knows he wants to go to graduate school, which will be another expense. He's being smart in that way too. He's like, "I'm not going to front-load all my student loans now and then I have — Oops! I have to go to grad school too and take on more loans," and then you're just totally aft.

[0:19:16.0]

KS: That totally makes sense, absolutely. What we found in our field of software is that net people who didn't even go to university, they just got a two year community college degree and they're now making six figures, because the companies that they're working for don't care what university they're from or whether they have a university degree. They just care about the fact that they can code. That person can really code circles around people who have amazing degrees. It really is more about the experience at the end of the day rather than your actual degree.

[0:19:42.8]

FT: If you have to work again, what would you do?

[0:19:47.6]

KS: Probably write, because that's one of my favorite things to do right now, like writing for the blog. We've been able to meet these like-minded people through the community that we've developed. I would definitely write. Just keep doing what I'm doing, freelance writing, probably.

[0:20:02.8]

FT: It does help too that you have had this community. Many of the folks you talked about have been on this show for the same reason that you're on the show, is that you achieved millions, or I should say a million so far in your 30s. What have you learned not to do, maybe, from that same community? Some advice that you decided not to take.

[0:20:25.4]

KS: There are a couple of things. Sometimes we disagree on the portfolio. I think, as Canadians, we tend to be a lot more risk adverse. There are a lot of [Flers] going 90/10 on their portfolio, 90 equities, and I'm like, "Okay. That's way too cowboy for me. I'm going to stick with my 60/40. I need to be able to live on the income incase — On the reliable income in case the stock market crashes." There's a few disagreements on there.

Generally, I think, as Canadians, we're less risk adverse, but I'm not. Yeah, I think we're pretty well aligned. It's really nice to meet people who did get it. You don't have to explain it. Back when I was working, people were like, "What is this?" I didn't really tell anybody until after I left, even then, they're like, "I don't get that. I can't believe that you did this. This is so crazy. I just don't understand."

When you actually are in a room full of Flers — Every time we met another financial — We meet another financial independent person, we're like Skyping with them and then somehow four hours go by and we're like, "Did we just chat for four hours? Holy crap! What did we even talk about? Holy crap! That's insane." It's been amazing meeting all these like-minded people that we would never have met while we were working.

[0:21:32.3]

FT: Is there any desire to make more money?

[0:21:36.0]

KS: No, not really.

[0:21:36.5]

FT: Like two million, three million, four million? I only ask, because while you are comfortable with the money that you have and the income that you have, there's a lot of power, beautiful power that comes in being able to earn more. In terms of being able to give back and have a legacy. I don't know. Has that ever been a part of the conversation with Bryce?

[0:21:57.0]

KS: We haven't really been thinking about monetization. If it happens, we probably just donate a lot of it, because I think once you are really comfortable with enough — More doesn't really make any sense. If I had \$10 million, would I do anything different? No. I'm perfectly happy the way I am right now. Giving back would be a bit part of it, but I'm not going to stress myself out trying to earn money, 'cause I don't need it.

[0:22:20.5]

FT: Right. All right, let's talk a little bit more about you, Kristy, as a child. I want to know, because I think that — I love hearing the stories about growing up in the Asian household and dichotomy of you breaking from that and the tension during that period of not having the traditional things, like a home. What was life like growing up in terms of how money was introduced to you growing up with your parents?

[0:22:52.5]

KS: The funny thing is when I was growing up in China, I didn't even know I was poor, because in the neighborhood, everybody was poor. We're all just hanging out, doing our thing and we didn't have a lot of money, but we were all really happy. It wasn't until we immigrated to Canada for a better life that I realized I was poor, because the other kids were like, "Oh my God! Your clothes, they're from thrift stores, and your mom cuts your hair, you're poor." I'm like, "Really? I

have four walls. I have clean air. I have water that doesn't give stomach worms. This is the best thing ever, like I had won the lottery. I'm not poor."

I think right from the beginning, I may have had a different perspective from other people because of growing up in China, and my parents were never ashamed of being poor, or they never made me feel bad, or feel sad. They were just like, "Be grateful for what you have. You have so much more than the other kids. You have so much more than when we grew up."

I think they instilled that kind of creativity of resilience in me, 'cause I realized, "Okay, we don't have money. How do I become creative?" Let's say they don't have enough money to buy, to pay for cable? I'm going to go to the library, because it's free, and there's no shame in doing that, because now I'm expanding my mind and I'm doing all these different things without having to use money to solve my problems.

They always instill this belief in me that this is a strength, rather than a weakness, and you developed character with adversity rather than succumb to it. I'm quite grateful for them for teaching me these lessons growing up, and I think growing up in China gave me that perspective that was different from everybody else.

[0:24:19.8]

FT: You said it, perspective is really priceless. To be able to be — In elementary school, middle school and to be able to brush off the fact that your friends are teasing you because of your homegrown haircut, or whatever.

[0:24:34.3]

KS: Yeah. I was like, "I can totally rock this. There's nothing wrong with this."

[0:24:37.9]

FT: Ah, that's so cute. It's been no doubt that you are who you are today. That's a huge, strong foundation that your parents gave you.

[0:24:45.9]

KS: Yeah, for sure.

[0:24:47.2]

FT: What's wrong with the world today? Through your lens, what's everyone doing wrong then — financially? Financially. There's a lot of wrong in the world. Let's focus on with money.

[0:25:00.4]

KS: I feel like people are not tracking the money, and it's not because people are — They don't know what they're doing, or they're dumb or anything like that. It's just — People are not tracking it. They don't know where it's going. At least that's what I found with a lot of my friends. Some friends who have actually made — Who made more money than us while working, they're looking at us and going, "How come you're financially independent? How come I don't have money? Where did my money go? I worked longer than you and I got paid more."

When you actually look into it to see where the money went, it all went into the house. They were paying ridiculous amounts of money maintaining the house, into property taxes, into insurance, and none of that actually adds to the equity of the house, it just disappears.

I think the biggest financial mistakes someone can make is not tracking it. I know it's a pain in the ass to dig around and find out where all the money went, but once you actually track thing — This helped us a lot when we were trying to keep within the 40,000 budget per year for traveling around the world. It made things easier, because I tracked everything. Even if you blow the budget once or twice, it's not a big deal. Everybody makes mistakes. I made mistakes too. Being able to track it allows you to see, "Hey, look! I'm going in the wrong direction. It's not going towards my financial goal," so then you just move back towards the right path and then you're good to go. I think tracking is absolutely paramount. That's one of the things that would help people a lot financially.

[0:26:19.6]

FT: And perhaps not going with the herd. This concept of, “Everyone’s buying a house, so I should too.” “Everyone’s investing in — Blah-blah-blah, so I should too.” “Everyone’s going to college and taking out \$100,000 in loans. I guess that’s the norm.”

[0:26:34.3]

KS: Exactly.

[0:26:34.9]

FT: Yeah. It sounds like you and Bryce have also the — I dare, say courage to say no to certain things that have been — That you feel pressured to go towards.

[0:26:47.0]

KS: Yeah. It’s definitely FOMO thing will drive you nuts, the fear of missing out, “Oh my God! I got to do this, because everybody else is doing this.” “Oh my God! I got to do this.” If you actually step back and then look at the map and look at the logic behind it rather than just get caught up with the emotion, I think that’s what we’re able to do. I think engineering may have helped us, because we actually stepped back and looked at the numbers and said, “Wait. This doesn’t make any sense.”

People are just making decisions not because it’s a good investment, but because they’re getting emotionally pulled into to say, “Oh no! I’m going to miss out. What if other people are in the market and I’m not in the housing market. I’m going to miss out.” It’s that separation from the FOMO which is based on feelings rather than fact, and then stepping up and doing the math and realizing, “Wait, I don’t want to do what everyone else is doing. Maybe they’re not right. Just ‘cause everyone else is doing it, it doesn’t mean it’s correct.”

[0:27:32.4]

FT: Yeah, you got to be able to reign in your emotions. You said it, the fact that you guys are engineers. I don't think it's a coincidence, the fact that you've been able to arrive at this status so early in life, Mr. Money Mustache also, I believe an engineer when he wasn't working, others have been consultants, worked in science and these very black or white fields that I think parlays to living your life also with a very rational ends.

[0:27:59.7]

KS: I think that helps a lot. I've noticed this engineering trend through the Fiers as well. Jeremy was a software engineer. I believe Justin was also in engineering. I think maybe part of the reason is because as engineers, we have the potential to earn a lot of money, but then we don't really care about the aesthetics of it. We don't care about showing off with a nice car.

Some professions, you kind of have to have that look. Like maybe you're in finance, you're making lots of money, but then you have to dress a certain way or look a certain way for your clients. I think for engineers, it's just like, "How can I optimize —" and that's the only thing I care about, just optimize and then all the other aesthetics doesn't matter. I think that is probably the key in why there're so many engineers who are financially independent.

[0:28:38.4]

FT: You're totally right. My dad, for example, engineer all his life, and my mom likes the fancier things, if you couldn't guess. My dad doesn't really care. Throughout their marriage, they've had nice cars and he refuses to drive them to work. He drives like — My mom drives a Mercedes, my dad drives a Volkswagen.

[0:29:01.3]

KS: Oh, that's very engineering.

[0:29:03.4]

FT: He's like, "It's really practical, gets great mileage, it's comfortable." That's what I want, and mom wants the bling. Yeah, so go figure.

[0:29:12.0]

KS: Absolutely, that's very engineering mindset.

[0:29:14.5]

FT: Who are your role models?

[0:29:16.4]

KS: I drive a lot of my inspiration from Steve Jobs. The funny thing is I think that he gave the piece of advice, but also the worst piece of advice. His best piece of advice is like, "Don't follow the status quo. Don't be dragged down by dogma. Everything around you is created by people that are no more smarter than you are." I absolutely believe that.

Fighting the status quo, not following the herd and just doing things, because everybody else is saying you're doing that. That so speaks to me. That message absolutely speaks to me.

The only other piece of advice that I don't agree with, it's just like follow your passion, follow your passion. The whole follow your passion mantra. I'm more — It's not necessarily just follow your passion, because he himself initially was he wanted to be some yoga teacher, spiritual leader, and then he ended up being an entrepreneur.

Sometimes you end up finding — You end up building your passion through building your skills. It's not necessarily just blindly going on looking for your passion. I really like Steve Jobs and that he says, "Don't follow the status quo. Challenge everything. Fight the status quo," which I really like, but then follow your passion and kind of more like the practical type of — You will get the passion once you get the skills.

[0:30:24.0]

FT: Yeah, maybe it's not so much following, but embracing your passions.

[0:30:27.7]

KS: I think so. Yeah, exactly.

[0:30:30.1]

FT: I think he ended up marrying a yoga instructor. I don't know. I don't remember how it worked out in his love life.

[0:30:34.8]

KS: Yeah, something like that. I really believe that — The fact that he had that courage to challenge the status quo is — Really speaks to me. I really like that about him.

[0:30:48.9]

FT: Not to be fearful of failure, that's what I learned from Steve Jobs, because he's failed big, his one big. He's also failed big.

[0:30:56.1]

KS: Oh my God, yeah. That's a terrifying thing, yeah.

[0:31:00.8]

FT: Kristy, thanks so much for coming on the show and sharing your behind the scenes of how you became Canada's youngest early retiree. That's quite a feat. Hope that your travels are fruitful and that you'll come back when you have updates.

[0:31:13.9]

KS: Thank you so much for having me, I had a great time.

[END]