EPISODE 1522

*"**FD:** It's called surviving fame within the Iranian community. That is a whole another podcast. By fame, I mean, I'm not that famous, but I mean, even just being known publicly a little bit. No, the haters are coming out of the woodwork all the time, and I was shocked, because when I wrote Funny in Farsi, I just thought, there's nothing in this book that anybody can possibly be offended by. It turns out that my existence can be offending. This was news to me, because people, I mean, I would get emails and they say, "Why are you wasting your time with stupid stories that aren't even funny? You should be talking about politics."."*

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:00] FT: So Money episode 1522, Firoozeh Dumas, author of the New York Times bestseller, *Funny in Farsi*.

ANNOUNCER: You're listening to Money with award-winning money guru, Farnoosh Torabi. Each day, you get a 30-minute dose of financial inspiration from the world's top business minds, authors, influencers, and from Farnoosh herself. Looking for ways to save on gas or double your double coupons? Sorry, you're in the wrong place. Seeking profound ways to live a richer, happier life? Welcome to Money.

[0:01:08]

FT: Welcome to So Money, everybody. Happy Monday. Today, I have the honor of welcoming a great luminary, whose words have touched the hearts of millions. I first discovered Firoozeh Dumas when I was a young 20 something, growing up, never quite feeling it was "cool" to be Iranian. I love my heritage, but it sometimes did create barriers for me when I was trying to make friends, feel connected to the American way. Then, at 23-years-old, I read *Funny in Farsi*. This book became a smash hit. It is a compelling memoir, a heartwarming, humorous account of Firoozeh's Iranian family's journey from Iran to the United States.

I found the book emotional, beautifully explored the complexities of identity. It's funny as the title promises, which means it is also really powerful. It has stayed in my brain for 20 years. It's its 20th anniversary since Firoozeh wrote this book. Today, I have the honor of having her on the show. We are going to talk about her journey. We're going to unravel the layers of her journey. We're going to explore the joys and challenges of embracing a multicultural identity. Even if you're not Iranian, or know about the Iranian experience, but you have felt othered as you were growing up and perhaps still, you have to listen to this show. Here's Firoozeh Dumas.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:02:36]

FT: Firoozeh Dumas, welcome to So Money.

[0:02:40]

FD: Thank you.

[0:02:41]

FT: 20 years in the making. I first needed to get a podcast. Got that, check. Read your book, check, and have been a fan for two decades. You have no idea how influential you have been. So often, your words in my mind, as I am putting one foot in front of the other as a grown adult woman in this country, an Iranian-American woman in this country. Thank you so much. Congratulations on your 20th anniversary of *Funny in Farsi*.

[0:03:10]

FD: Thank you. Thank you so much for all your kind words. I'm very touched. Thank you.

[0:03:15]

FT: It is. It is not hyperbole. I'm not exaggerating here. Your book, for so many, for millions of people was such a – it was a permission to be Iranian, finally, in this country and to be proud of that and to find the humor in that and to celebrate that. I was hearing you talk about the genesis of this book. I want to get into a little bit of that even more. You were 36-years-old when you published it. You had never written professionally before. But what turned you to writing this, I was understanding that it was 9/11. Maybe we could start there a little bit with just what was the fuel for this? You wanted to write your story for your children and ended up being the story for so many people. What was it about that time that drew you to this project?

[0:04:04]

FD: I started writing when I was 36-years-old. I'd never ever written creatively before. I mean, I'd written papers in college, but nothing creative. I started writing simply because I wanted my kids – I had two kids at the time. I have three now, but I just wanted them to know my stories. I had grown up in America and I'd never ever seen my story on TV, or in a movie, or in a book anywhere. I just thought, if I want my kids to know what my life was like, I'm going to have to write them, write these stories.

I joined a writers group when I was 36-years-old. I wasn't planning on publishing my stories, but 9/11 is what changed my mind. It was a friend who actually pointed out to me and said, “You really should try to get these stories published.” It took me almost a year to find an agent, because agents kept telling me, humor and Iran don't go together. There's no audience for that. I was told, “You can write about oppression. Oppression is in. Oppression is hot.” I said, “Well, first of all, I wasn't oppressed.” I would say, my dad ruined that literary career of mine by not oppressing me.

More importantly, I wanted to put my stories out in the world, which are about joy. That's what I wanted my legacy to be. I did not want to write another sad story for people to read. I wanted to write a story that would make people want to go next door and meet their Iranian neighbor.

[0:05:28]

FT: As you write, “It is through humor that we can soften some of the worst blows that life delivers.” How do you, Firoozeh, incorporate the humor in your storytelling, so that you're tackling two things, you're tackling what is serious, but what is also has levity and to strike that balance is a work of genius. How do you approach that? Or is it just – is it natural? Because you're a funny person. I think you're a funny person. I just think, only if the work at it. You either have it or you don't, but to write that, to write it in word form is a different task.

[0:06:01]

FD: First of all, thank you for your kind words again. Writing is something I don't think about. It's one of the few things in life I do on automatic pilot. I don't know how I write. I don't know. I don't have a process. I just sit and write. I write the same way that I talk. I'm the same person I am on stage as I am at Trader Joe's. I'm the same person who write it in the story. People, when they meet me, they go, “God, you're just like your work.” I go, “Yeah, I am truly a one-trick pony.”

I can't give any advice, other than the fact that I grew up with a father who is very, very funny. But my father more than being funny is very kind. I grew up seeing the gentle humor in life. There's so many different kinds of humor. I put humor in quotes, because there's a lot of things, like I think humor at the expense of somebody is not funny. Everything I do is very PG, or probably even G-rated. It's good though. I don't want to lose listeners, because they think, “Oh, God, it's PG.” I don't use shock value.

I point out the things, the universal things in life that are always there for everyone to see. I think because I grew up with a father who pointed these things out to me, it’s like, if you grow up with a dad who's a great basketball player, you end up knowing how to shoot hoops, which is something I don't know how to do. I give the credit to my father.

[0:07:33]

FT: Your family moved here in the early 70s. I'm curious, what drew them here? What was the immigrant impetus to come to America?

[0:07:42]

FD: We came in 1972 just for a two-year assignment. My father was an engineer with the National Iranian oil company. We came to Whittier, California for a two-year assignment. Then we went back after two years. It was just a limited time here. We came here just long enough to try every junk food multiple times and shop at Sears and then go back after two years.

[0:08:04]

FT: Then you came back.

[0:08:05]

FD: Two years later, he got an assignment to come back to work on the same project. We were here when the revolution happened, but accidentally. We weren't one of these people who was smart enough to foresee what was coming and move the assets abroad. Not that my dad had any assets, but even what we had, we left. We were here accidentally and it was very fortuitous for us.

[0:08:27]

FT: Sort of our story, too. My father came here with my mother. He was finishing his PhD. The plan was to go back to Iran full-time. They had me here, which was just a not coincidence, but it just like, it wasn't planned. They had me here. The plan was to go back to Iran. The revolution happened. They were like, “Let's see if we can figure out a way to stay in the States.” So much luck in that story. What's your relationship with luck in your life, or have you thought about luck and its role in everything, in every facet of your life?

[0:09:02]

FD: Okay. Farnoosh, this is literally an entirely other podcast, because my entire life, my favorite word is serendipity. My entire life is based – the best things in my life have been completely serendipitous. I always say, I think I'm the luckiest person. I know, even though I've had devastating things happen in my life, but everybody does. I'm also a weirdly lucky person. Very,

very lucky. I know things are going to work out and they do in the long run. They do. Not necessarily in my timeframe, or how I think they're going to work out, but they do.

The other part of it is, and I think this is a really big part of luck is you have to also be there to be lucky for other people. I think if you put it out in the universe, it comes back. This is when we're getting to the woo-woo portion of this podcast.

[0:09:50]

FT: Yeah. No, because well, let's dive a little bit into this, because you're right. Because I think, at least for me, the luck that I have really benefited from is because someone gave me a chance. Someone called me back. It was the people. The circumstance almost always involved somebody taking a chance on me. I think that this is a very Iranian, Iruni, I think, perspective on life, too. One of our gifts, maybe. My mother raised me with this faith, like to have faith. What is faith really? It's believing in luck at the end of the day.

[0:10:28]

FD: Okay. I'm going to have to tell you two stories.

[0:10:30]

FT: Okay, please.

[0:10:31]

FD: I used to travel a lot on the lecture circuit. Unfortunately, COVID stopped that portion of my career, which I'm hoping is going to start again soon. I used to travel a lot. As you know, a lot of times, people in airports and airplanes are in bad moods. I used to always say, I'm going to be the person in the good mood. I travel light. Sometimes there'd be people and there was no room for their luggage in the overhead bin. I would say, "Oh, you know what? There's a room under the seat in front of me." The flight attendant would be like, "Do you know this person?" I'm like, "No, but I'm only 5'4", and there's room."

Every chance I ever got, like whenever I'd see a mother traveling with little kids, I always say, "Let me know if you want me to help you. I'm a mom myself." Sometimes people thought that was creepy, but a lot of times they took me up on it. The truth is I just always try to be the nicest person in the airplane. I also travel with Trader Joe's chocolates, the individually wrapped. I offer it to my seatmates. Everyone's in a good mood around me, because they've been offered chocolate. Even if they say no, it already puts them in a better mood. Okay, so a little manipulative, but it's okay.

[0:11:48]

FT: I'll take the chocolate.

[0:11:49]

FD: When I travel, I have the best travel luck. If there's one seat left that I need, I get it. I always make my connections, no matter how late my flight is. My luggage does not get lost.

[0:12:03]

FT: I can't knock on wood right now, but I so much think –

[0:12:05]

FD: Knock on wood. Knock on wood. Watch me die in a plane crash. But no, it's I do have really good luck. I think as silly as it sounds, I think when you enter the airport and you're like **[inaudible 0:12:16]**, and you're in a bad mood, you're going to attract people that are equally in a bad mood. You just spread that bad mood. The opposite is true. If you try to actually be that one nice person on the flight, or in the airplane, people react. They pick up on that energy and you wouldn't be surprised.

[0:12:35]

FT: Well, Stanford study says that empathy is contagious.

[0:12:40]

FD: Oh, a 100%. A 100%.

[0:12:43]

FT: I think that's part of it is like, you want to pay it forward, because you're so grateful for what just happened to you.

[0:12:48]

FD: Well, and the great thing is with my career the past 20 years, I've had this really incredible opportunity to do nice things for people. Just because they like my work as a writer. When I hear someone's in the hospital and they're a fan of mine, I call them. I surprise people. I call them. It takes 10 minutes out of my day. It really changes somebody else's mood. As you know, we Iranian women, the phone is our best friend. I mean, I can –

[0:13:18]

FT: I just wrote about this today in my e-mail. I said, one of the things that I do is haul people on the phone. Remember the phone?

[0:13:25]

FD: Yeah. Oh, I love it.

[0:13:25]

FT: Remember dialing before texting?

[0:13:28]

FD: I love the phone. The other thing is like, I was on Facebook – I got a message on Facebook a couple of weeks ago from a 10-year-old girl. It was such an incredibly mature message. I thought, "I wonder if she wrote this, or her mom." I noticed she lives in El Salvador. I thought, "What time is it in El Salvador?" I called her. I had this whole conversation with this 10-year-old girl named Delora, who was the most –

[0:13:52]

FT: So sweet.

[0:13:54]

FD: - precocious 10-year-old I have met.

[0:13:56]

FT: You will always remember this.

[0:13:58]

FD: Well, and me too. Me too.

[0:13:59]

FT: It's a core memory. Yeah. Yeah. You will, too.

[0:14:02]

FD: I think, whatever you do in your life, whatever your job is, look for those opportunities to be surprisingly kind. Man, you will be a happier person for it. You end up actually getting the reward, not the person for whom you're doing something to. Then I have to tell you, I do have such weird, weird luck. I mean, coincidence, serendipity. I just want to share a somewhat quick

story. I'm recently divorced. My youngest at the time we're going through this was 15 and she's now 17. It was an ugly, ugly divorce. I felt so horrible that this child had just seen me sob for almost a year.

I wanted to do something really special. There was a place. There was a ballet she wanted to see in London. I'm not wealthy, but this is where I realized I needed to do this. This was a splurge I needed to make, because I wanted to go and see this ballet with my daughter in London. I knew she'd never forget that. I knew I'd never forget it. We went to London for three nights. One of the things I wanted to do when I was there was to take her to the Yayoi Kusama exhibit at the Tate Modern. Kusama is an artist. She's a Japanese artist. She's 93-years-old. She's the hottest artist in the world right now.

She has a really incredible story. She was treated horribly her whole life as an artist. She's a Japanese woman. I mean, I'm telling you, this woman triumphed. Anyways, I wanted to take my daughter to this exhibit and Kusama makes these immersive rooms that you walk in and they have mirrors and lights. Anyways, we go to London, we go to the Tate Modern. It turns out, that exhibit is sold out for seven months. I was so devastated, because I had my heart set on having this experience with my daughter, of having this bond with her. I kept asking different employees. I'm is there anything I can do? Are there cancellations? Can I join the museum? What can I do?

Everyone said, "No. There's nothing, nothing, nothing." I was really heartbroken. Finally, after an hour of trying, we left the museum, went out the wrong door. We end up on the street in London. All of a sudden, I see someone I know from my hometown. Yeah, and it's one of my middle daughter's friends that she'd grown up with. It was like a mirage. I called her name and she called my name. I said, "What are you doing here?" She said, "I'm just passing through London for a couple of days." I said, "Well, let's take a picture together and send it to your mom."

We take a picture. I text it to her mom who's never around. She's always traveling. I texted the mom and I said, "Look who I just ran into in London." That was it. Well, turns out the mom had COVID, and so she was at home. She responded to my text and she said, "What are you doing in London?" Now, I have never learned the fine art of texting. I still text in paragraphs with

punctuation. I'm explaining to her the whole thing and mentioned the Kusama Exhibit, I can't get in.

Anyways, so then we go to pack our bags, because we're leaving the next morning. Before we did, I went to the concierge and I was like, “Hey, is there any way I can get into the Kusama room? If you know what I mean?” The guy is like, “No. That's the hottest thing in town.” I start packing my bags and my phone pings about 10 minutes later. The friends, the mom that I sent the photo to, she said to me, “I know someone who knows someone who knows someone. I just got you guys into the Kusama Exhibit.”

Okay. My jaw stayed open for 10 minutes. I didn't even say anything to my daughter. For 10 minutes, I just stood there. Then I said to her, I said, “You're not going to believe this. We just got tickets to the Kusama Exhibit.” The next morning, before going to the airport, we went and saw the exhibit and it was everything I had dreamt it was going to be. when I was standing in that room with my daughter in the infinity room with all the mirrors and all the lights, I just thought, “There is a God. There is something.” I mean, I don't even have words.

[0:18:09]

FT: I think, it also is telling me that the world is beautifully small in that way. Well, what is that story telling you other than just life is serendipitous?

[0:18:18]

FD: Well, to quote my 98-year-old father, I grew up with a father who used to tell me that there's a world that we see with our eyes and there's a world that we don't see with our eyes and they're both just as real.

[0:18:29]

FT: Oh, wow.

[0:18:31]

FD: I can tell you, I turn 58 in two weeks. I 100% believe that. I could literally write an entire book on coincidences and things that are just unbelievable. Just to give you a really recent example, I've been trying to buy a condo, because like all divorced women – well, I shouldn't say all divorced women. Most divorce women, I need a place to live. I want a place that's mine and I can't afford to live in the town that I'm currently in. I was looking in other places and I keep getting outbid. It's been really hard. But I have this faith of there's a house with my name on it and I'll find it.

A couple of weeks ago, my realtor called and said, “There's this condo. It's not for sale yet, but I think you should make an offer.” But the price was too high. I couldn't. I mean, it was too scary for me to spend that much of my money, because I'm a writer. I'm not in high tech. I don't have stocks. For me, what I have is what I have. That night, I dreamt. My mother passed away on Easter Sunday and I dreamt of her. She took me by the hand. We went somewhere together. I didn't remember all the details. When I woke up, I had this incredible surge of courage. I called the realtor and I said, “I'm going to make an offer on this condo.” I did and I got it.

[0:19:54]

FT: Oh, my gosh.

[0:19:55]

FD: It was literally because of a dream I had with my mom.

[0:19:59]

FT: That is so, so special. Well, going back to your childhood, your memories of your mother and your father. This is a financial show and you just talked about – you brought up real estate. I mean, that is so Iranian. You just had to bring up real estate. But Firoozeh, what did you learn about money growing up? What were the conversations like?

[0:20:18]

FD: Oh, my God. Okay, so my dad gave me more bad advice about money than anybody could ever. The man was a font of bad advice. I remember, we moved from Whittier, California to Newport Beach, California, when I was in sixth grade. We were renting a house and the owner was an older lady and she wanted to sell the house. She came to my father and she said, "Look, I don't want to be a landlady anymore. I'm too old for this. I want to sell you my house and I'm going to give it to you at a really low price." My dad said, no.

Then she came back and she said, "Look, I'm going to deduct a year's worth of rent, okay? I really want to offload this house." My dad was like, "Huh, what do you think I am? A sucker? No." I said to my dad, as a 12-year-old, I said, "Dad, why don't you want to buy this house?" Because I thought it would be a good idea. This is the nugget that my father shared with me. He said, "Firoozeh, when you own a house and something goes wrong, you have to fix it yourself. When you rent, it's someone else's problem."

I thought, "Well, that's genius. That's genius." Why buy when you can rent? That's what I learned from my dad. The irony, of course, is that he lived to completely regret that decision, because that house then went up in value like, I don't know, a 1000%. It became a story that he loved to tell of like, "Oh, the condo, I didn't – the house I didn't buy in Newport Beach." Then my dad had this really terrible habit that I learned from him, which was when he had money, my father would very generously loan. By "loan," I mean, to family and friends. It became a huge mistake. You should not do that. You should make sure that you have enough for yourself first. If you do loan money, you need to do what my friend Denise does, which you have people actually write a contract and they pay you interest and there's nothing wrong with it, but it just makes it so that it's clear. There's no vagueness.

That's the thing. We have these families and we love them so much and we would do anything for them. Sometimes it's not such a good idea "loan" people money that you love, because you have to be very clear on whether it's a loan, or if you want to get it back and the timeframe and what happens. That can end a lot of relationships.

[0:22:32]

FT: Oh, yeah. It's why I usually say, don't lend, unless you're already convinced it's a gift.

[0:22:39]

FD: Right.

[0:22:41]

FT: It's not a loan, unless there's a contract with it. Even then, there's a good chance –

[0:22:47]

FD: Well, it's interesting. My friend, Denise, made a lot of money in high tech. All of a sudden, she was a wealthy woman. She has a big enough heart that she did want to help people, but she didn't want to become an ATM, which is very smart. She lends it with a contract. I learned that from her. I don't have enough to lend anybody. If I did, there would be a contract involved and it would benefit both sides.

[0:23:10]

FT: Hmm. Well, so now going a little bit back to your book, *Funny in Farsi.* I remember reading it and the feeling I got was that, well, you talked about it. You assimilated a lot growing. You intentionally assimilated a lot as a child. It was your survival mechanism. I related to that. When did that change for you? I feel like, for all of us, there's an arc as immigrants. We come here and we feel like we want to Americanize really quickly, because that's the way that we're going to be accepted. We have a fear of rejection. Then something maybe shifts in your life where you're like, “Oh, wait a minute. Being Iranian is super-duper cool.” Not just within the Iranian community, but even outside the Iranian community.

When was that recognition for you? Where would you say you are now in living in these two – like you say, you're very fully Iranian and fully American, but have you maybe shifted to one side or the other as you have gotten older?

[0:24:07]

FD: Oh, yeah. Definitely. Well, I pick and choose the parts that work to my benefit.

[0:24:13]

FT: That's smart.

[0:24:15]

FD: As a divorced woman, I'm not going by anything I learned in my Iranian culture, because none of that is good. I go by what I learned in the Western culture, which is you go girl. That's it. That's exactly it.

[0:24:30]

FT: Yeah. Power, power.

[0:24:33]

FD: Yeah. That second half of life is where all the gifts are. It's true. If you believe it, it actually is true. When I came to America in 1972, there were no Iranians anywhere near us. We ran into an Iranian one time in the two years that we lived in America. We were, of course, at a mall, because like, where do you see Iranians? At the mall. It's like, animals are in the zoo. Iranians are at the mall. We ran into these Iranians and we actually heard people speaking Persian and we went up to them and we said, **[inaudible 0:25:08]**. Like, "Are you Iranian?" I mean, it was like two polar bears running into each other in Hawaii. It was just shock.

It turned out, they were actually just traveling through California. They didn't live here. We nonetheless invited them to our house for a meal. I remember telling my mom like, we need to get Kentucky Fried Chicken, because I'm thinking – My mother was like, "**[Inaudible 0:25:29]**." She made them, of course, a Persian feast. For me, assimilating wasn't even an option – Not assimilating was not an option. There were no Iranians anywhere.

Then once the revolution happened and Iranians did start coming to America, by then I was so fully assimilated that Iranians seem foreign to me. These Iranians that were coming seem foreign to me. Then when I went to college, I attended college at UC Berkeley, that's when I thought, I'm definitely going to start figuring out what parts of my Iranianness I really, really like and that I want to keep. Because it just wasn't even an option before. The survival mechanism was to fully assimilate. There's a lot I love about the Iranian culture. I mean, I love the –

[0:26:20]

FT: Tell me. Tell me what you love most.

[0:26:22]

FD: Oh, what I love, I think the warmth. The at the warmth.

[0:26:26]

FT: Hospitality.

[0:26:28]

FD: I lived in Germany for six years. I remember thinking, wow. I mean, I love Germany for many reasons as well. I kept thinking, this is like the opposite of Iran. Germany and Iran, like polar opposites when it comes to how warm strangers are to one another. I love the hospitality. I love the fact that Iranians are very fuzul, okay, which is nosy.

[0:26:52]

FT: Nosy.

[0:26:53]

FD: But there's a positive side to that, too, because we want to know your story. Yes, it's gossip reasons, okay, but we still want to know your story and I like that. I like that people ask questions.

[0:27:03]

FT: Well, I mean, that's why I'm a journalist, okay, perhaps.

[0:27:07]

FD: It's basically –

[0:27:08]

FT: It's very fuzul. Very fuzul.

[0:27:09]

FD: [Inaudible 0:27:09] with a salary. You go, girl. You go, girl.

[0:27:14]

FT: I have made it a career out of my fuzuli.

[0:27:18]

FD: Go.

[0:27:18]

FT: Yeah. I mean, we should just leverage our strengths. You know what I'm saying?

[0:27:22]

FD: Absolutely. For me, being a storyteller, talking about myself endlessly, because all my stories are about myself, it is an extension of the memuni, where we just endlessly talking. I just get mine published in the New York Times, or in a book. That's the only difference. Basically, my conversation, what you're reading is what I would be saying in some memuni somewhere. If you invited in a memuni, you're saving yourself time and money.

[0:27:44]

FT: One thing I wanted to ask you, and I think you may have discussed this on another podcast with Leyla Shams, who's a brilliant creator of Chai and Conversation. I think the two of you were talking about this, almost like, I don't know if it's tension, or – Okay, so I'll give you an example. Because I think this is universal within religions and cultures. There is a lot of judgment going on. I had a professor in grad school wrote a book called *Jew versus Jew*. It was this look at Jewish people, people of the Jewish faith, but all of the ways that they might be polarized within the community.

Within the Iranian community, I felt growing up and still, especially now with so much happening politically overseas in Iran and the revolution. For me, at least, I've gotten emails from random people that are like, "You're not being Iruni enough. You're not being loud enough as an Iranian. You should have Iranian in the first sentence of your bio." It's like, they're judging me because I'm not as Iranian as they wish I was out loud. That always, I mean, it hurt when I get these emails. I'm like, "Oh, am I not being – I don't know. Am I being disrespectful? I'm sorry."

I feel like, for them, it's displaced anger. Have you ever experienced this? I'm sure you have, as you have had this globally celebrated book, but also probably some people who are like, I don't know, that were the haters.

[0:29:15]

FD: Okay, this is a whole another podcast, okay.

[0:29:17]

FT: Yeah. We've had four podcasts in one.

[0:29:19]

FD: It is. It really is. It's called surviving fame within the Iranian community. That is a whole another podcast. By fame, I mean, I'm not that famous, but I mean, even just being known publicly a little bit. No, the haters are coming out of the woodwork all the time. I was shocked, because when I wrote *Funny in Farsi*, I just thought, there's nothing in this book that anybody can possibly be offended by. It turns out, that my existence can be offending. This was news to me. Because people, I mean, I would get emails and they say, "Why are you wasting your time with stupid stories that aren't even funny? You should be talking about politics. Why are you not writing about human rights? Why are you –"

I'm like, "Why don't you write about human rights? Why don't you talk about politics?" You know what it is, I'm going to just be really mean for a moment, but I think these trolls deserve it. These are people who have done nothing with their lives. How easy is it to sit behind your computer screen and just criticize those who have the courage to put themselves and their work out there?

[0:30:16]

FT: Yeah.

[0:30:17]

FD: To all the haters out there, just go get a hobby and do something and contribute. Then you will no longer actually feel the way you're feeling. You will actually be like, you're a part of the conversation. Because I think part of it is this jealousy that they're not part of the conversation.

[0:30:33]

FT: It's like that Instagram post I got in my feed, because the algorithm knows me so well. It was like, regarding haters. These aren't people that are on the field playing. They're the ones who bought the tickets to watch you play. They think that you're some spectator sport for them. I'm sorry, but no. I'm feeding a family. I'm making an impact. I'm putting myself out there. I'm failing forward. You know what? You bought a ticket. You bought a front road of this. That says something. I must be doing something right.

[0:31:07]

FD: I mean, I used to be really, really devastated from the criticism, because I just – First of all, I'm a pioneer in criticism as in Iranian. This is 20 years ago when this book came out. I was totally unprepared. Nowadays, people talk about this. They talk about trolls. There's a word for it. Well, I was getting – because my email used to be public. I was just getting emails from people and I was shocked. I would just want to go lie down for the whole day. It was so upsetting to me. But now, I mean, you just say, “God bless you.”

[0:31:38]

FT: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Well, as we wrap, Firoozeh, my gosh. I had all these questions. I think I got to three of them, but this is – That's always a sign of a great conversation when you have not even looked at your prep notes. As you are now in your next chapter in your life as a go girl, independent woman, how do you want your luck to show up for you in these coming years?

[0:32:02]

FD: Well, my luck – I mean, it does keep showing up. There's something great around the corner on a regular basis. What I just try to do is to contribute to that same river of good karma. I'm not just taking from that, but also contributing from it. I look for opportunities to contribute.

[0:32:21]

FT: Well, I'll be watching the front row cheering you on. I will pay lots of money for that ticket. Thank you so much for coming on So Money. Truly, this is for me like, I will – I can already say,

I've been doing this podcast for nine years. I am so glad we finally made this happen. Better late than never. I so appreciate you and your work. You're just as incredible in person as I thought you would be. Thank you for not letting me down in that way, cause that can happen sometimes. You put all your hopes and dreams in meeting someone who's your hero from afar and then they really disappoint you. Thank you, Firoozeh.

[0:32:58]

FD: Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:33:02]

FT: Thanks so much to Firoozeh for joining us. I'll see you back here on Wednesday. In the meantime, if you want to pick up a copy of *A Healthy State of Panic*, pre-order it. You will get access to my program called Scared Smart. It's a three-video series, plus the workbook, plus the introduction to *A Healthy State of Panic,* to help you get a head start on some of the advice in the book on how to better relate to your financial fears and actually use your financial fears to make great money decisions. Go to healthystateofpanic.com for all of that. I hope your day is so money.

[END]

