

**EPISODE 439**

[SPONSOR MESSAGE]

**[00:00:36] FT:** On So Money we spend a lot of time talking about how to live a richer life and some of us are hustling as entrepreneurs, which can make managing money even more complex. Enter FreshBooks, the easy cloud accounting software made specifically for entrepreneurs and business owners who need to find a better way to deal with their paperwork. For example, invoicing. With FreshBooks, it takes about 30 seconds to create and send a polished professional looking invoice.

FreshBooks also has automated expense tracking where you can link your FreshBooks account to your credit and debit cards. The next time you expense that business lunch or tank of gas, it will show up automatically in your FreshBooks account. Accepting online payments can be a challenge sometimes but with FreshBooks, it takes two clicks. For a free 30 days unrestricted trial, go to [Freshbooks.com/somoney](http://Freshbooks.com/somoney) and enter "So Money Podcast" in the "how did you hear about us?" section.

If you have any questions, FreshBooks' award winning customer service is super helpful, friendly, and has zero attitude. So give FreshBooks a try for 30 days for free by going to [Freshbooks.com/somoney](http://Freshbooks.com/somoney) and enter your "So Money Podcast" in the "how did you hear about us?" section.

[INTRODUCTION]

**[00:01:45] FT:** Welcome back to So Money everyone. Thanks for joining me. I'm your host, Farnoosh Torabi. If you are excited to learn more about how to get what you deserve in the work place, how to ask for it, you're going to like today's episode. We've got Alexandra Dickinson on the show today. She's on a crusade to close not only the gender wage gap, but also all the gaps at work; your professional gap, your title gap, your promotional gap, whether you're a man or a woman.

She's the founder and CEO of Ask For It, it's a boutique consulting company that's working to close the gender wage gap and affecting change on both the institutional and individual levels.

And Ask For It works with companies, schools, organizations, and individuals through trainings, workshops, and consulting, which I thought was great because here we have companies inviting this person and her movement into their organization to say, "Yeah, teach our employees how to ask for it." That's empowering. It's good to know that your boss wants you to ask for it.

And ultimately the company's goal, Ask For It's goal is to help both men and women be paid based on their talents and skills, not just their gender. Alexandra arrived at her entrepreneurial role as the founder of Ask For It after a layoff. She's only 30 years old and realized this is the time in her life to do something relatively risky, and so far it has proven a success. We learn why she is so savvy when it comes to asking for it, and that requires going down memory lane a bit. She has pretty influential parents. And of course, got to pick her brain, how do we ask for it so that we get it?

Here is Alexandra Dickinson.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:03:33.1]

**FT:** Alexandra Dickinson, welcome to the show, I can't wait to learn all about how to get what's mine in the workplace. What I deserve and how to advance. This is such an important mission that you're on. The universe was telling me to reach out to you, I had my husband who came home from work and said, "I learned about this amazing company," you had been — I think your team was at his company giving a workshop.

You were mentioned in one of my really good friend's newsletters as an expert on negotiation. My assistant had brought you up at a meeting and I thought, "All right, let's make this happen, I need to reach out to Alex Dickinson and of course your company Ask For It is so needed right now. We'll learn a little bit more about all the services but I want to start with your personal journey, why you wanted to start ask for it as I understand, this was very personal for you.

I think we have a little bit in common in that you got laid off and that was the impetus for realizing that you wanted to do your own thing and that happened to me too. I got booted from a

company and I realized, “Okay I could go back to working for the man or the wo-man or I could work for myself,” and I chose, I thought a harder decision, which was to work for myself, far more fulfilling. Tell us about why you wanted to be your own boss particularly in this field?

[0:04:57.1]

**AD:** Yeah, first of all, it’s an honor to be here. Thanks so much for having me, I’m so excited to chat with you today. Absolutely I got laid off from my last job which it was pretty shocking to me. I had always been sort of a good girl that got good grades in school and worked hard and got internships and did all those thing, and so when the boss called me and said, “We have some news,” I was really taken aback and I cried about it for a little while, not too long but there were some tears, I’m a crier. Then I started interviewing...

[0:05:31.5]

**FT:** It’s good to cry, get it out. Yeah.

[0:05:33.5]

**AD:** Exactly. I started interviewing at other places and I thought about it and I had been working on Ask For It as a side project for a couple of months anyway. It came to a point where I realize my heart wasn’t in the interviews, my heart wasn’t in thinking about what those jobs would be. I was feeling depressed already just thinking about going to work for another place that was just not going to be fulfilling to me and I thought, “You know what? I’m going to give this a try. I’m working on this already, It seems like it’s gaining traction, if not now, when?”

I’ll tell you, I’m 30 years old so I’m not that old yet and I don’t have a kid and I’m married and it seems like a good financial time to take the risk, seeing as how we’re talking about money. When you’re young you don’t have too many obligations, you don’t have too much debt, it’s a good time to try something like this. So I’m just happy to be on this journey and happy to be working with other women and men to help them achieve their goals.

There is nothing like lifting as you climb, there is nothing that feels as good as a client coming back to me to say, "Guess what? Not only did I get the promotion I wanted, I got a bigger raise than I wanted," which happened to me last week, which was amazing. So it's pretty great to feel like my job is to help other people achieve their goals and that's a job I made up for myself, I feel pretty great about it.

[0:06:54.0]

**FT:** For sure. How did you enter this particular field though? Was this something that you were trained in? Do you have a background in negotiation? What was the transition?

[0:07:03.7]

**AD:** Yeah, so my background is communications and gender, that's my academic background, my master's degree I got in communications with an emphasis on gender, my professional experience in communications and I started out with a cofounder and her background is HR, recruitment. So together, we developed the curriculum and we worked together to put together those different pieces and it made a nice whole together.

Since then, I'm running the company now and she's doing her thing, which is great, we're very close still. But now I spend lots of time reading and researching all the latest social science research and things like that. Negotiation has always been an interest of mine and money has always been a primary focus of mine ever since I was 14 years old, got my first job at McDonalds and started saving for my Roth IRA when I was 14.

[0:07:57.6]

**FT:** Really? That's what you wanted to do at 14?

[0:07:59.8]

**AD:** No, that is not what I wanted to do, that's what my financial planning, trainer dad told me to do and I thought...

[0:08:06.5]

**FT:** Well we have a lot more in common than I knew.

[0:08:08.8]

**AD:** Yeah.

[0:08:09.4]

**FT:** I didn't work at McDonalds but my dad definitely dragged me to the bank to open up a Roth IRA at 16.

[0:08:14.5]

**AD:** Amazing.

[0:08:16.2]

**FT:** So Ask For It is the company, Askforit.co, and whether you're asking for that raise or more resources because you want to create a project at work or you want to get that promotion, you want to change perhaps verticals within the company. What do you find to be the most common thing people want to ask for and that you're often helping people with?

[0:08:39.9]

**AD:** People usually come to me when they're in a moment of career transition, whether they're looking to — they're interviewing at new places and they're looking to get a raise or they're at their current job and they feel like they've made a lot of contributions that maybe haven't been recognized and they're looking to be recognized in a formal way whether that's a promotion or raise usually both.

Something that I always encourage my clients to do is think a little bigger picture about your goals for not just your job, not just your career but your whole life. So really think about in five years, five years is so long that you can't necessarily set a direct goal and then achieve that goal because life happens along the way but in five years, if you're single now, you might be married. If you're married you might have the kid, if you have one kid you might have two.

Life changes can happen to you in five years and if you can imagine, "Okay, what situation am I going to be in? In five years that I want to start planning for now, and how does that translate back to goals that I can set in the short term?" So, "Listen, I've got a kid who has come up on college, I really got to make sure that I'm in a strong position financially when that happens. I'm going to be looking for a bigger promotion, I'm going to be looking to transfer let's say from director to vice president. So what am I going to be doing in the short term to set myself up for that success?"

Because when it comes to negotiating, it's not always going to be about the last dollar, it's about — sometimes it is, when your company has the money to give you, but I work with lots of folks that work in nonprofit or mission driven organizations that just don't have big budgets and I always encourage people to think about what other things are valuable to you? And by knowing what your personal goals are a little bit further down the line, you can back that up to say, "Okay, well, if I want to transition into a leadership position, then maybe I want to think about getting some more direct reports, getting a budget to manage."

Some other things so that when you get to that point when you're ready, you can point back to all the experience that you've had that you asked for and usually it's a win for everyone because your boss is like, "Great. You can take this off my plate, you can do that for me." Now you have the experience to point back to when you're ready to come up for that promotion.

[0:10:49.6]

**FT:** So reverse engineering it is what sounds like you're strategizing here.

[0:10:54.5]

**AD:** Exactly.

[0:10:55.7]

**FT:** Even if your plans change, even if your “five year plan” derails or you change your mind, what’s the worse that’s going to happen? You’ve amassed all of this experience and all these skills that will definitely be transferrable to whatever else you’re interested in doing, right? There’s no real big risk in planning it out even if your plans don’t pan out.

[0:11:16.8]

**AD:** Exactly.

[0:11:19.0]

**FT:** All right, so let’s talk a little bit about Ms. Alex and my ears kind of perked up when you said you had a job at McDonalds at 14. I thought, I hear so many stories about entrepreneurs, we started working at a young age and any job. They didn’t have the fanciest of jobs, they weren’t doing — what’s really a fancy job at 14? Like babysitting might be the fanciest thing you can do?

[0:11:41.4]

**AD:** Maybe.

[0:11:42.3]

**FT:** Tell me a little bit about your financial philosophy first, how maybe you’re trained to think about money and how that helps you in your own personal life? Then we’ll talk a little bit about childhood a little bit, going down memory lane but what would you say is your money mantra Alex?

[0:11:58.6]

**AD:** Yeah, absolutely. Like I mentioned. My dad's a financial planner and so all the stuff was engrained in me from a very young age from when I was definitely too young to fully understand it or really even care about it. He sort of said, "Well this is what you're doing, you're opening a Roth IRA, you'll thank me later," and I was like, "What's a Roth IRA?" But I opened one anyway and now of course I'm glad for it.

The thing that my dad taught me when I was very young which has really stuck with me which I try to impress on all my girlfriends and all my clients is pay yourself first because the money that you save now is going to just grow over time. The more money you can put away when you're young, you are just going to be so grateful to yourself later in life. For women in particular, women have a wage gap, in general. Women make less than men and so by the time you get to retirement, your social security is going to be less, any pension that you have is going to be less because it's based on how much you made while you were working.

Let's say you take time out to have kids? Even if you marry a man, this is a little sad to think about but women typically live longer than men and then you don't want to outlive your money, that's the worst thing that could happen, right? So pay yourself first and pay yourself first doesn't mean buy the handbag that you want first. It means put money away for your future first and even if it's a little bit, even a little bit when you're young, it grows and grows over time and so that was something that was impressed upon me from a very young age and it did stick.

[0:13:31.4]

**FT:** So when you got that first job, did you feel comfortable asking for the raise, given that you had, I guess more or less more confident upbringing when it came to money and awareness of money as a kid? Did you feel prepared when you were on the job finally to negotiate for yourself?

[0:13:52.6]

**AD:** Oh gosh, I would say that I was definitely aware. I don't know that I would say I was confident at that age. I think I was offered 10 cents more than minimum wage and I thought that that was a big win at 14. So no, I did not negotiate my first job.



[0:14:09.6]

**FT:** Oh not at McDonalds. Trust me I know that. I'm impressed you even got more than minimum wage, but when you were in the work force, did you feel that all that training as a kid helped and that you were able to get a little bit more in the workforce once you were out of college?

[0:14:29.7]

**AD:** It's interesting because I have always been a person that sets big goals and then I like to draw a straight line to my goal and get all my obstacles out of the way. Now this is something that I try to share with others but as somebody who has done this for a whole lifetime I can tell you that when you try to set too far away goals, it doesn't always work out exactly as you imagined, right? So I have this idea of, I went to school in New York City, I wanted to stay in New York City and I'm an only child so I can't share and I really wanted a studio apartment, I didn't want to have roommates.

So I backed that up into, "Okay, I need to get a job that makes X amount of dollars when I graduate so that I can afford the lifestyle that I want." So I put the lifestyle first at that time, which I learned so much from my first corporate job. I worked at an oil company, so I had interned there during college. I only took paid internships in college, I did not take any unpaid internships because I just felt that my time was worth something even though I was young.

So I took an internship at an oil company and it paid pretty well and then they made me a full time job offer when I graduated and the advice I was given at the time honestly was, "Wow, this is so much more than most people get for their first job and they should be very loyal." They did make me a good first offer but I did not negotiate it even though I had more awareness, I didn't have the confidence at that time.

I stayed there for five years, I learned a ton, like I said. I did get that lifestyle that I was looking for. Minimal though it was, I got my studio apartment, I paid for it myself, I paid the broker fee

myself, I never felt prouder and I learned a lot from it but I also learned what works for me and what isn't an ideal fit for me and working in a big corporate environment just wasn't my jam.

[0:16:22.2]

**FT:** So that confidence factor that you talk about, is that something that you coach people on and how do you get over that? If you feel — I feel that, especially when you're young and you have that job, you're just happy to be there because you know how competitive the, maybe not so much now but if you got out of the school five, six years ago, it was a whole different economy. Getting that first job could have taken a year. Were you really going to then ask for more money? It may have felt inappropriate even though it was deserved. So how do you coach people on rebuilding or building confidence?

[0:16:58.4]

**AD:** Absolutely, yeah. It's so important because if you don't believe it first, no one else is going to believe it. If you're going in there sweating bullets, thinking like, "Oh my gosh, is this a good idea? Maybe I shouldn't be doing this," for whatever reason. The context or your own personal comfort. If you don't buy it, they're not going to buy it. The first thing I work with people on is the mindset.

First of all, we think of negotiation as, "I'm going to win, you're going to lose. There's a fixed number of pieces in the pie and I want all the pieces and I'm not giving you any," right? So that opponent mentality gets you ever time. If you can approach it with a creative problem solving mindset of, I have some priorities and you have some priorities. I may not know what yours are, I may not know what your most important thing is, it might not be the last dollar for you.

It might be, you really want, you know, you're getting a new job and they want someone to start next week and you were hoping to take the summer off after you graduated. Well they really want someone to start next week, maybe they're willing to throw you a bone for that? The thing that most people forget to do is think about the other person, we're all so busy focusing on ourselves and we're all so busy thinking, "What do I want, what do I deserve?"

Well that's great but you know what? The person that you're talking with is also thinking the same thing. If you actually put the work in and the time in to ask questions that are strategic to try to give you a sense of what their priorities are, that's the way that you can make your request that's going to be easy for them to say yes to. Make it something that's going to appeal to them.

So that goes a long way towards the confidence factor of, it's not just, "Okay, am I going to bluff? What am I going to say? What are the magic words?" Never bluff. First of all, never bluff. It's not about magic words, it's about having a thoughtful conversation, understanding where your counterpart comes from and then fitting what you want in with what they want.

[SPONSOR BREAK]

[0:18:53.3]

**FT:** Hey So Money listeners, I want to take a minute to tell you all about our sponsor Ting. Ting is a different kind of mobile service provider, finally making your monthly cellphone bill easy to understand and affordable. With an average monthly bill of \$23 per device, Ting is helping people save a lot of money on their cellphone bill. With Ting, how you use your phone determines what you pay. If you use less, you pay less.

Absolutely love your phone? 80% of devices can come to Ting. Just use the handy device checker to see if your phone can make the move to Ting. But if you're looking to upgrade that old phone, they have plenty of options in their online shop too. Stuck in a contract? Ting will give you credit if you're paying an ETF to come to Ting. They offer 25% credit of your ETF up to \$75 per device just for switching.

Ready to make the switch? Ting is offering \$25 towards your first device or Ting service when you sign up at [Somoney.ting.com](http://Somoney.ting.com) to get your \$25 credit.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

[0:19:57.3]

**FT:** It echoes what I just learned also from Harvard professor Dan Shapiro, he wrote a book recently called negotiate the non-negotiable. Your sentiments are spot on. I think he also believes that the best way to come out of a negotiation for both parties is to really have empathy and I said, “Well okay, what if — okay, let’s say you do all the homework, you do all the good question asking, you figure out what the other party needs but the other party doesn’t care about you?”

He goes, “That’s okay, it only takes one person.” In other words, you can steer this ship. If you’re the one who decides, I’m going to be the adult, I’m going to be the caring person here and the thoughtful person here to actually go and figure out what the other person needs. In this case, your employer, if they need you to start early, they need you to work kind of unorthodox hours, whatever it is. Well fine, give them that but like you said, maybe if you’re going to be the employee that’s going to fulfill all their requests then there’s a price for that. They can’t have it all.

[0:20:58.1]

**AD:** Exactly.

[0:20:59.6]

**FT:** What’s a challenge that you experienced in the work place that, besides of course the layoff which I high five you virtually on that. But what would you say was a challenge that you had and what you would have done differently?

[0:21:12.7]

**AD:** Let’s see. The biggest challenge that comes to mind of course is getting laid off but after I left my first job, I actually got recruited to my second job to do something similar than what I had done at the first place. At the time, I thought, “Jobs are like men, you want to be pursued, this is so great, I’m amazing, I got recruited, I am so cool.” I lasted six months at that job. I really did not take time during my interview process to understand the people that I would be working for.

Understand what their priorities were, I was so distracted by the title, by the pay rise, by the fact that they had sought me out, that I couldn't wait to tell the story to everybody, "Guess what mom and dad, guess what friends? Guess what boyfriend? I got a new job, I'm hot stuff," and I really did not — the interview is a two way process and many of us that are sitting in the employee seat think, "How am I going to make that like me? How am I going to get them to give me what I'm asking for?"

And we don't think strategically about what it's going to be like when we get there sometimes, it's easy to get distracted. I didn't ask the right questions, I didn't ask enough questions. I was so distracted by how exciting everything seemed and I was so ready to tell that story to my friends and family, "I got a new job, I got a promotion, I got a raise, I'm so hot." There weren't enough challenges for me at that job.

There wasn't enough for me to do that I thought was compelling and I became very unsatisfied and I left within six months. So I didn't take that opportunity to really make that interview work for me.

[0:23:04.5]

**FT:** But I think quitting was a great way to address the problem. Because so many of us would have probably stayed because of the good pay and the title and all of that, don't you think? That's a situation a lot of us are in, we don't like our jobs but we're tied to — we have like the golden handcuffs, we want to get the money and not that we're making CEO pay but you get accustomed to the benefits and the salary.

[0:23:31.5]

**AD:** For me, I came home miserable every day, I mean I would count the days that I didn't cry as supposed to the ones that I did. I don't think I was married yet but I was living with my boyfriend who is now my husband and we talked about it together and he really was like, "Listen, you can't go on like this and I can't go on like this, so like, what's going to happen here?"

I'm a pretty self-motivated person and if I'm not happy, I'm going to do something about it and so I just felt a sense of dread going into the office every day and I didn't get along well with my managers and I didn't have a lot of teammates. It was a very small team and so I felt isolated and alone and also bored. Boredom is almost the worst thing. Like, "Isn't there any other contribution I can make?"

[0:24:20.4]

**FT:** Right. "You hired me for something obviously but I'm not doing it." One of the great things about Ask For It, I think, is that you're invited by companies and organizations to come into their organizations and teach their employees about how to negotiate better and how to ask for what they want and that's very encouraging, right? Because it says the message that you should have confidence because in a work place that's healthy and understanding and nurturing they want to cultivate a work environment where their employees feel safe and encouraged to negotiate and to speak up.

I think that's something that we sometimes don't assume, right? That the workplace is this dark and upsetting place where they just want you to do your job, head down and then, you know, maybe it will give you a watch when you retire, but then you shouldn't expect anything else. This is really, for me, I think it's a sign that maybe the workplace is changing and the environment's changing, employers want to empower their employees, that's kind of great news.

[0:25:32.2]

**AD:** Yeah, and you know, a satisfied employee is an employee who is not looking for the next best thing. So somebody who feels like, "Oh I have some long term goals and I know how to achieve them here at my current company." It's not always about the last dollar. There are other things that are valuable and that's the work that I do with people is, "Okay, what are your longer term goals and then what sorts of things are going to set you up now for success down the road?"

It's a win on both sides because from the company perspective then plays are more engaged, they're less likely to leave, it gets at the retention issue especially for the younger folks that

change jobs more often. So it works for everybody really. That's the crux of a good negotiator is you're not just getting a good deal for yourself but you're maintaining and enhancing your relationship with your counterpart too.

[0:26:22.9]

**FT:** Ask For It is not just your company, it's become this mission, it's become a hashtag on twitter, #askforit. What's been some of the surprising elements of launching your business that have blown you away, that have been really endearing and have been really encouraging to you as an entrepreneur?

[0:26:40.7]

**AD:** Yeah, I mean one piece of advice that I often give people is when you're doing research, everyone knows you have to do your research before you negotiate for something. Talk to other human beings and there's lots of caveats I could give you about, "Oh, if you're going to talk to your current colleagues then you have to be very careful of this and that," right?

You can probably imagine what all of those things are because you've heard of that advice before. What I find shocking is, what people find out when they do it. I convince them, "Okay, it's worth it, how much are you willing to pay to avoid having an awkward conversation with somebody about how much money they make?"

You just come at it straight forward, you're not coming from a place of curiosity, you're coming from a place of, "I'm doing research because I'm about to apply for a new job or I'm about to go into my performance review. I'm wondering if you would share a ballpark salary with me, because I think that information would be helpful?"

When people go out on a limb and they do it, the information they come back with is astounding. I had one client who she had this conversation with them, she realized she was making \$20,000 less than them. She thought, "Well gosh, I know, maybe you went to a different school than I did but our backgrounds are not that different."

She brought it up in her performance review and the boss said, “You know, I think the pay is standardized for this level. I don’t know. Let me just confirm with HR.” And the boss when to HR and it was a typo, it was a mistake when they hired her, they put it in wrong basically and if she hadn’t had that conversation and she hadn’t asked, she wouldn’t have known. \$20,000, that’s a lot from that confidence perspective to think this is how much this job is worth and not question it for a year.

[0:28:25.3]

**FT:** A typo? A typo!? This begs the question, if you get what’s considered maybe proprietary information, not public information, a kind coworker gives you a ballpark figure of what he or she is making to help you with your negotiation. How do you bring that up in the meeting with your boss in such a way that doesn’t seem like you were being sneaky or maybe even in some cases, in some, depending on the culture, depending on the bylaws, that could be breaking a code of some sort.

You’re not supposed to go snooping around, finding out other people’s salary because that’s private. Women ask me sometimes, “I found out somehow,” they don’t say how, “I sense or I know or I found out that my colleague who is a male makes 20% more, \$30,000 more. How do I bring this up?” I say, “My gut instinct is, don’t make it about him, ask for that raise but not make it all about your colleague, make it about what you’re worth, your value.”

[0:29:28.2]

**AD:** Yeah, you’re spot on. I would advise somebody, you never give up that person who gave that information to you first of all because they are doing you a favor basically. So you never give them up. Exactly you don’t reveal where you got that information. You bring up the money last, you make your case throughout the entire conversation or series of conversations.

It’s about what you made the company, what you saved the company, it’s about your past performance, what you’re being asked to do going forward and then you’re looking at the market place for what’s a fair value for the work that I’m doing around here and at other similar companies. And, “I happened to know that there are folks that do a similar job like me or folks



around here or whatever that I'm just trying to understand the differences. I'm just trying to make sure I'm paid fairly."

Appealing to people's sense of fairness can often be a really good tactic because what we feel from those playground days of hey, she stole my toy, hey he stole my ball. That doesn't leave us even as adults. It manifests in a different way but people want to feel like they're being treated fairly, people also want to feel like they are acting in a fair way. So appealing to that sense of fairness.

[0:30:46.5]

**FT:** Fairness and I also find that in my experience, it's helped to present your case and if there's like a little bit of an awkward silence or something, you can end with, "If you were me, what would you do?" Coming to someone seeking advice as opposed to, "Here's what I want and here's my ultimatum," you know?

But, "Here is what I've learned. What would you recommend happens in the situation?" I think because then you're one, making it be more of a conversation, it's nonthreatening and two, it forces the other person to suddenly have empathy, which is ultimately the best way to negotiate.

[0:31:27.4]

**AD:** Absolutely. Yeah. My favorite piece of negotiation advice that I have ever been given is, "Speech is silver, silence is golden." People feel a need to feel silenced and if you're willing to hang with that silence, you could get somebody else to jump in and say, "Hey, you know what? Let me just talk to HR and figure that out for you."

[0:31:48.3]

**FT:** I'm writing that down. "Speech is silver, silence is golden," and this is in context of negotiation. Brilliant. Yes. Whether you're like asking for that raise or I find even when you're shopping, this is a little side bar but when you're in the mall or in the store and you want to ask the sales person for a better price or 10% off or whatever. This has also been studied in the

books and they say, “Give it a little bit of a pause and if there is an awkward silence, let that kind of sink in and be awkward.” Then it almost forces the other person to jump in and fill. If you're not going to do it, the other person will. It's almost like, don't be that person who is going to fill that awkward silence, let the other person say it.

This is all fantastic advice and I want more people to go and check out, Askforit.co and #askforit. Let us know your stories of success and follow Alex on Twitter, we're going to make sure that we really get the word out about your mission Alex because it's so important and you're all over the country, right? I mean a lot of your workshops are in New York but you are an international service.

[0:33:04.2]

**AD:** Yeah, I've had clients over in London, clients on the west coast. Yup, the phone works anywhere so I can always meet with people, happy to travel, love traveling. So yeah, absolutely.

[0:33:15.7]

**FT:** Do you find that the issues here in the US are similar abroad in terms of people's challenges, difficulties at work, getting ahead, figuring out what they want to do and how to ask for what they want?

[0:33:30.8]

**AD:** There's always cultural sensitivities that you want to bear in mind. So most of the research that I study is from this country and is pretty rooted in things that are going on here but my husband's British, so I've got a lot of family over there, spend a lot of time over there. So for me to work with someone in the UK, I have a sense of that. It's important though to bear those cultural differences in mind even if the cultural difference is with the person that you're negotiating with but you're on the same country. We have a global workforce, right?

So you might be talking to somebody who grew up in a different country or who transferred offices. Your company has multiple offices and they came over from somewhere else. That's

work that I do too is, okay, understanding what sort of trust do you value? Do you value trust where you have lots of credentials or trust where it's very personal and you know that person?

So different cultures have different viewpoints on this thing. Any insights that you can get into — and there's a balance because you don't want to go so far into stereotyping but empathy, like you said, is really the key. It's really trying to put yourself in that other person's shoes and get to know them well enough that you can do that.

If you really are being thoughtful, respectful, open minded and coming again with that creative problem solving mindset. It's not just about what I want, it's about creating something that's valuable to both of us. Those are skills that work no matter where you are, no matter where you're from. People just want to feel heard.

[0:35:08.2]

**FT:** They do, and hey, if you aren't getting what you need in the workplace, maybe it's not a bad idea to become your own boss?

[0:35:16.6]

**AD:** Hey, becoming my own boss is the best thing that's ever happened to me. Like you said, I have always been a very self-directed person, never really liked following other people's rules and that's not always the best quality, it's definitely gotten me into trouble in my younger years. Now, I'm in charge, I get to decide what I think is valuable, there are plenty of things that are not that exciting that I have to do anyway and it's a great feeling but it's a risk.

You have to make sure that your financial ducks are in a row before you say, "Well, I'm tired of my job, I'm going to quit." Do you have an idea that's valid, do you have savings, do you have a partner? There's all kinds of things you have to think about before you make the leap but once you do, it's pretty great.

[0:36:04.7]

**FT:** There's no looking back. Alex Dickinson, thank you so much for your inspiring story, your amazing mission and we'll be looking out for you, thanks so much for joining us.

[0:36:15.7]

**AD:** Thank you so much, it's been an honor to chat with you today.

[END]