

EPISODE 819

*“**SC:** Early in my career, I had gotten in a car accident and a big dually truck ran over the front of my car. I had broke my leg and bruised my ribs and had a concussion and I couldn’t work. At this point, I’m a single parent, I didn’t have any child support, so I really couldn’t take time off. That was a huge wakeup call.”*

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:59.6]

FT: Our guest today knows a thing or two about how to defy the odds, triumph in life despite economic challenges and grow a multimillion-dollar business. Susie Carder began her career as a hairdresser. Before that, she was raised in a very small home as one of nine children. She recalls the days of paying her mortgage with her credit card. As you just heard, raising her daughters as a single mom when a life-threatening accident takes place.

She also admits to losing 90% of her wealth in the Great Recession, just 10 years ago and she has risen from the ashes. Today, she teaches others how to build wealth. Her new book is called *From Bootstrap to Big Time*, how to take your company from \$250,000 to 10 million, and emphasizes that profit and planning are essential parts of a business's overall success.

Susie also talks about in her life at least, how her faith has played a role in her success. By the way, she runs a nine-figure business and has helped people from Steve Harvey, to Lisa Nichols multiply their wealth, and also has supported big brands from Dell to Paul Mitchell scale their businesses.

Here’s Susie Carder.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:02:18.1]

FT: Susie Carder, welcome to So Money. You're so money.

[0:02:22.7]

SC: I love money. Money is fun.

[0:02:25.4]

FT: I mean, could you even imagine a life where you weren't this successful? I feel reading your bio and learning a little bit more about your past and your upbringing, you always had your eyes set for bigger things. Maybe take us back to let's start with childhood. We usually don't get into that until later in the interview, but you've such a fascinating upbringing with so many siblings. I want you to take me back to that 1,200 square foot house I grew up in, sharing a bathroom with six sisters, or how many of you there were, and the moments that you had thinking, "Oh, my gosh. There has to be more out there."

[0:03:01.6]

SC: Oh, well we did – when you grow up, you don't know what you don't know, right? I didn't really know we were poor. It's the nice way to say it.

[0:03:11.0]

FT: Well, that's a good thing. I think that's kudos to your parents.

[0:03:12.8]

SC: We have love, we have family, we always have food, but there was just this sense of there has to be – like you watch TV and you're like, "Well, look at that car and look at that home and look at that – look at the look at those people and look at their hair." We never went to a hairdresser. We never went out to dinner ever. We never had pizza brought in, right? What's normal today, we just didn't do that because there was nine kids. My mom and dad, so that's 11

people in a household. There's Bobby, Ronnie, Joni, Shelly, Susie, Kelly – Bobby, Ronnie, Stevie, Terry, Joni, Shelly, Susie, Kelly, Debbie, right? There's a mouthful of –

[0:03:53.4]

FT: Say that 10 times fast. Yeah.

[0:03:55.4]

SC: Right. I think I was in seventh grade that I went to my girlfriend's house, Joni Rang. She had this beautiful white house. Everything in our house, Farnoosh, was brown. With that many kids, you can't have anything white, or clean.

[0:04:14.5]

FT: No.

[0:04:15.4]

SC: I just remember walking in, thinking it was so palatial. Oh, my gosh. This is so beautiful. I didn't even know something could be so beautiful. They had a pool in the backyard. It was just my first experience of seeing wealth in a different level. In today's standard, it would be a regular track home, but we didn't – I just never had saw anything like that. That was my first experience of really seeing something could be different.

Then that time, my dad he was a ship builder. He retired from the military and then he worked at a shipyard. He showed me his paycheck. His paycheck was \$450. I remember saying, "That's not a lot of money for all these kids." Then in today's standard, I looked it up, it would be about \$2,800 a month for 11 people. How do you do that?

[0:05:11.1]

FT: Where did you grow up? What town?

[0:05:13.6]

SC: I grew up in California in San Diego.

[0:05:17.2]

FT: Then your life leads you to becoming a hairdresser. I understand too that there were moments where you had financial –

[0:05:25.5]

SC: Challenges.

[0:05:26.7]

FT: Challenges, thank you. I was trying to look for the look the correct word. Then you were financing your mortgage with your credit cards. What got you there? What got you into that trouble?

[0:05:38.2]

SC: Well, it wasn't really trouble if I really look at what we were doing at the time. Although I have to have had trouble.

[0:05:47.5]

FT: Oh, please tell me everything.

[0:05:48.2]

SC: In my activity in building a business was I was a hairdresser and my dad, when we all turned 18, his philosophy was get a job, get a husband, get out. I had to get out. I had early on

figure out how to pay my rent. I moved out when I was 17, because I thought I could do this. This is so easy. There was no talk about college. We didn't talk about college. I went to cosmetology school and worked at Motel 6 at night and went to school during the day. I figured out early on how to make money in that vocation. I was making a quarter of a million dollars a year working three days a week as a hairdresser.

[0:06:34.6]

FT: What?

[0:06:35.5]

SC: I got to a point where I got bored of just making money. My heart was calling me to do something bigger, but I didn't know what to do, because I'm a hairdresser. I don't say that negatively. I just say what other skill sets do you have? I didn't have a formal education. Although I had education, I would go to classes, I would listen – we didn't have podcasts back then, but I'd go to the library and I'd go to the bookstore and I was just starving for business education to understand how to grow a business and grow your wealth.

[0:07:09.7]

FT: How does a hairdresser make a quarter of a million dollars working three days a week? Were you charging a lot? If you were, how were you deciding how much to charge? I guess, that can also get into how you coach your clients perhaps.

[0:07:23.8]

SC: Right. Well, the average hairdresser in today's standard makes about \$45,000 a year. To make a quarter of a million dollars and this was 10 years ago, 15 years ago that that's a lot of money. I wasn't charging a lot. My average haircut was at that time \$48, but every client Farnoosh was chemically dependent on me.

Chemicals is where the money was. One, your attention is there. They are addicted to you. I wanted all my clients addicted to me. I coined to myself the color expert, so that they could keep coming back to me. That's how I made a quarter of a million dollars a year. I worked very strategic. There's a saying in that industry called staff and pack and rack them. I had them lined up. I had an assistant that worked with me. I had a full system in doing that.

Just like you said, I'm like, how does that happen? Well, that's what other salon owners started to say, "Well, how do you do that? That's insane. If I could teach my hairdressers how to do that, we'd be amazing." I started going into schools and salons teaching cluster classes on how do you build a six-figure book. I didn't go in it to be a business. I just went, "Oh, this would be fun."

[0:08:49.5]

FT: That's your mantra. You say you believe business should be fun, not painful. Although, there are always going to be growing pains. What was your biggest challenge as you are growing?

[0:09:02.2]

SC: Well, there's twofold. One is how do you get to that next level, right? How do you leverage yourself? I realized I was an awesome technician. I owned a big fat job. Early in my career, I had gotten in a car accident and a big dually truck ran over the front of my car. I broke my leg and bruised my ribs and had a concussion and I couldn't work. At this point, I'm a single parent, I didn't have any child support, so I really couldn't take time off. That was a huge wake-up call.

I had taken a week, which was crazy. I didn't have family that could help me with the kids, so I still had to manage my kids. I remember having to have to go to work, because I didn't have disability insurance, I didn't have savings. I was spending everything that I made in my lifestyle and fun and in my kids. I had a justifiable budget, but I had to go to work with this broke leg trying to do clients and a concussion. I'm like, "There's got to be another way." I own a big fat job. I can't even go on vacation. I can't even take care of myself, right?

That was a painful process. I swore that day, I would master this thing called money. Because it wasn't providing me freedom, it was providing me really a jail sentence, because I had to make

a certain amount of money because of the lifestyle I had created for myself, which was great on one hand, but not great on the other hand called freedom.

[0:10:43.7]

FT: Yeah, I think they call that the golden handcuffs in some industries, right? Where you're like, "It's great that I'm making all this money, but it's not really paying off in my life."

[0:10:53.7]

SC: Exactly. From that point, I really turned it around to understand money. Before I wasn't really teaching about money, I could make money but really leveraging my wealth, building my wealth, that wasn't a skillset that I had at that time. Then I learned how to manage my money. Started saving 30% of everything that I made and I would just put that aside, going this, this, I can't touch this.

[0:11:18.8]

FT: 30%. 30% is aggressive, although it's not unusual to hear from people like you who have amassed a lot of wealth and in some ways, if you wanted to retire you could. A lot of people who retire early say they save 30%, 50% of their income. How did you do that while building a business? I mean, people have a hard time just saving 5% or 10%. Tell us a little bit about that.

[0:11:43.9]

SC: Well, the great thing about being an entrepreneur, Farnoosh, and you know as well, Farnoosh as I do, is we create our own financial well-being. I just looked at if I'm saving 30% and putting that aside, how much more do I need to create so that I can continually do that? I got strategic in my marketing, I got strategic in my budget. I got rid of a lot of things I didn't need to do. I don't need another pair of shoes, right? The frivolous spending went away. I quit buying gourmet coffee. When I started looking at I would drink one or two gourmet coffees a day, where I'm like, "I'm sorry, Starbucks is not paying my bills, so let me quit paying their bills."

[0:12:26.4]

FT: You're paying their bills, right.

[0:12:28.1]

SC: Exactly. Realized, I make just as good coffee at home.

[0:12:33.6]

FT: Well it sounds like two things were happening for you to be able to advance quickly in your financial life. One is you're just making these non-negotiables. 30% saving that, I'm just going to have to work around that. That can be a little daunting at first, but in some ways liberating, right? Because that is something consistent that you are going to stick to that becomes a habit that just becomes your new framework. You just work within that. I think that's a great lesson.

Then it's nice to hear from you as someone who has built so much wealth that you are also somebody who doesn't really see a value in frivolous things. That even when you're making six figures, a \$4 or \$5 latte can really hurt your budget.

[0:13:18.7]

SC: It adds up. All that adds up. That's when we don't realize that those pennies that you're spending, because you go, "Oh, it's only four or five bucks," well let's look at that for the year, right? I was spending literally \$1,200 a year on coffee. I'm like, "Okay, you know what? That could go on my retirement account, right? That could go on a vacation. That could go on an emergency fund." When you look at the accumulation of it, that's when I would get the wake-up call, because the little \$5 here, \$100 here, that seems like well whatever, I deserve that.

I also had to work on my mindset around it, Farnoosh, because I really had as entrepreneurs nobody when you come home they're going, "Oh, my gosh. Great day. You're amazing." Nobody says that to us. My great day amazing was let me go buy a new pair of shoes, let me go buy something, because that was the way I validated myself for doing a great job, doing an amazing training, or serving a client to go, "Oh, I need to fill my cup in other ways. I need to self-

acknowledge. I need to do a gratitude journal. I need to figure out what else would give me that joy," because the minute you put the shoes on and you wear them once, that joy is gone.

[0:14:30.2]

FT: What would you do to self-gratify? That's a great point.

[0:14:35.2]

SC: One, I had to make a list. This sounds really silly. To make a list to go what are the things that make me happy? Spending time with my kids, spending time with a girlfriend, going to walk on a beach, filling out my gratitude journal every night. What are the things that I'm grateful for? Really looking at how blessed I was inside the life that I created. Those kinds of things filled my cup, just as much as going to buy a new pair of shoes. You totally can tell I love shoes, right?

[0:15:08.0]

FT: Little bits come up, but you know, who doesn't? It's a vice. I always say shoes are great, because no matter how your weight fluctuates, your shoes will always fit. Except when you get pregnant.

[0:15:18.0]

SC: Right. You don't have to get naked. You just try them on and go, "I love them."

[0:15:22.3]

FT: They will stand by you through all times. Well, we've covered so much ground. I want to jump forward to today. You have a thriving business, you help so many incredible people, Steve Harvey is one of – on your roster of clients, as well as major brands, like Paul Mitchell Dell. You have a book, *From Bootstrap to Big Time*. That is coming out soon, right?

[0:15:48.8]

SC: It's coming out soon and I'm so excited. This will be my 10th book, which I'm very excited about; my first book in the entrepreneurial space that all the other ones were in the beauty industry. It's been a while, a long time coming and to create this one, so I'm very excited about it. It was my journey of how I started as a single mom building a multi-million dollar business and then selling it for millions to Thompson Learning and [inaudible 0:16:18.9] Publishing.

It was a journey, it is a journey, right? I won't say it was a journey, because it is a journey and how you did that with no formal education. I think a lot of us hold ourselves back, because we don't have this piece of paper called, "I didn't go to university." Well, there's education all around you and I couldn't afford to go to a university, but I would find mentors like you, I would find mentors in books, I would find mentors at seminars to learn what I needed to learn to implement it tomorrow, right? Traditional school bore me, but regular fun entrepreneurial education, I eat that up like a sponge, because I can learn it today and implement it tomorrow.

[0:17:03.7]

FT: I would love to ask you a little bit about single motherhood and managing your money and your family. A woman just e-mailed me today wishing that I would cover this topic more on the podcast. To be honest, it's not something that we do a lot on this show, but there have been times where I've interviewed women like you who've talked about being single mothers and how all of that works for them, or didn't work. Any advice for single moms out there? It's so hard, even when you're in a two-parent family. It just feels there's never enough support sometimes, especially when your kids are still growing and you both are working. Any advice?

[0:17:44.5]

SC: Yes. The first thing that I would say is you have to realize that it's about quality time, not quantity time, right? I would much rather be with my kids and be with them, than have my children around, right? Many times you're like, "I'm there 40 hours a week. I'm taking care of my kids," but are you really there, right? We get so checked out. I had huge guilt around, because as a speaker I was on a plane all the time traveling, I had to rely on friends, I had to rely on community to help me with my kids.

It's all about what's the quality and what are the experiences that you want your children to experience. I fortunately can sit on the other side now when my children are – I can't believe they're this old, Farnoosh. I just want to say that out loud. My youngest one will just be celebrating her 30th birthday and my oldest one is 32.

[0:18:42.8]

FT: Wow.

[0:18:43.7]

SC: Now who they are as women is breathtaking. My oldest one has an MBA from Wharton. She went to Harvard. She's an investment banker. What she learned from me as an entrepreneur is what paved her way to be who she is today.

[0:19:02.0]

FT: What do you think she learned the most from you? What has she really benefited from being your daughter, as far as now being so successful in her career? I mean, so many things, right? What do you think maybe was the one thing?

[0:19:21.1]

SC: Let's see, what I would say and what she would say. What I would say is from an early age, they worked. If they wanted something, we would put these binders together and they would sit in front of the TV and I paid them a dollar a binder to put these binders together that I was shipping out to my clients. We did a whole ceremony around it. You have to do it really meticulously and this is, we're transforming people's lives. I want you to be responsible. Every time you touch it, it's not just a binder, it's people's hopes and dreams, right? That made them be more meticulous when they would put it together and then they would get paid. I remember Farnoosh, one day she's like, "Mom, we're done." I'm like, "What do you mean you're done?" She's like, "We will not work for a dollar binder."

[0:20:03.5]

FT: We want a raise.

[0:20:04.7]

SC: Right. I said, "Well, what do you mean?" She goes, "Mom, you sell these binders for \$349 and you're only paying us a dollar. That is child labor."

[0:20:19.0]

FT: You're breaking child labor laws.

[0:20:20.4]

SC: Oh, my goodness.

[0:20:22.4]

FT: Oh, my gosh. Good for her. Sorry mom, but that's awesome. That's really awesome.
[inaudible 0:20:27.9] your worth.

[0:20:28.9]

SC: She goes, "I want to get paid \$2." I'm like, "I am not paying you \$2." I said, "I'll pay you a \$1.75, or \$1.50." She's like, "I will not do a \$1.50. I will do a \$1.75." I'm like, "Deal. Let's shake on it." Later, this became her essay for Wharton.

[0:20:45.8]

SC: Exactly.

[0:20:46.7]

FT: I would accept anyone to the number one business school with a story like that. That's incredible. Good for her. Great job. Great job, mom.

[0:20:53.9]

SC: Thank you. Then the youngest one is an entrepreneur. She's a medical aesthetician and a makeup artist and she travels all over the country and does makeup for film, television, print. She's a mom as well and to see who she is as a mom, you really have to go, "Okay, I didn't do half bad." I really – because you beat yourself up, right? You're not there, or I missed this game, or I didn't go to this party or whatever, because there's always something to do with them. I really chose wisely to go and teach them the lessons.

What we do, Farnoosh, isn't – you're not just doing a podcast. You truly are shaping people's lives and giving them hope and giving them future. When I shared that with my children I'm like, "Look, I'm not just on a stage. It's not about me. It's about every time I touch someone that touches someone else and I have a responsibility. My gift from God is my life and your gift back to God is what you do with your life." I instilled that with my children to go, "Don't just show up. What's your contribution to humanity?" They both are huge advocates for their communities, for their families, in the work that they do, they really want to make a profound difference.

[0:22:11.6]

FT: I'm really fascinated by people who are really faith-based and then apply that to their financial principles that they live by. Would love to explore this with you a little bit, because Dave Ramsey is very much faith-based, faith-oriented and his community is the same. You've mentioned your faith a few times now and it seems like you have a really deep connection to God. I just want to know a little bit more about the correlations you have seen in your life with regards to being committed to your faith and how that has played out for you in your money life.

[0:22:48.8]

SC: Yeah. I think everyone has a higher power. Mine happens to be God. I'm not putting my belief systems on anyone, but what is yours, right? That higher power that you can turn to when it's dark, because there is darkness; there's darkness and business, there's darkness in relationships, there's the questioning of who am I as a woman, who am I as a mom, who am I as a spouse, significant other? There has to be that safe place that you can go to to refuel yourself.

It has played a huge part in my life. I pray every day and I pray several times a day. It's just a silent thing that I do to give me strength to go on, because I might have a client that doesn't like me, or isn't happy. I can't let that stop me, because I still have to do what I have to do. The biggest blessing, I would say, one of the things that happened in 2007 and I know a lot of us and a lot of your listeners experienced this, when the market crashed, I crashed, right? I was going through a really hard time in my marriage. We had worked together for 20 years, we had built this business, the training and development business together. We sold that business for millions and we had another business that we didn't sell and we decided at that point that we weren't going to work together anymore.

We wanted to work on the marriage and be separate, but at that time, the industry was in so much turmoil that we were putting \$30,000 a month of our own money into this other business. I'm like, "Look, we can't keep doing this. It's not making sense. We've got to shift something." We were heavily invested in real estate and at that time, the real estate market crashed, and so we had four properties that we had and all four of them crashed, right? They were under market, under value. One was a million dollar building that we had and the renter's that were in it, they couldn't pay the rent anymore, so we're supplementing that rent while we're trying to sell that building. It was the perfect financial tsunami. I won't even say it was a storm.

Our marriage didn't survive. We were together for 20 years and it got too much for him and he chose to move and move to Singapore and get some space. I'm sitting here holding the bag. It was devastating. I lost 90% of my wealth during that period.

[0:25:20.8]

FT: What?

[0:25:22.6]

SC: I remember being on the floor, Farnoosh, crying, going, “Why? I’ve been a good steward. I’ve done everything I was supposed to do.” I truly was having my little pity party and crying. I can’t get up. I can’t do this again. I don’t have 20 years. I don’t have it in me. When you get the rug pulled out from under you and you get clobbered while you’re on the ground, it takes a lot to get up. I remember hearing, and it still makes me emotional, hearing, “Get up. I will never leave you and I will never forsake you. This will be your biggest lesson and your biggest victory. Get up.” I’m like, “Okay, I’m going to get up.” I didn’t know what to do, because I felt, here I’m a business coach and here I teach people how to leverage and build and build millions and eye of a ding-dong just lost millions.

What it felt like overnight, it was really about a two to three-year period, but it felt overnight. I just got up and said, “What you know how to do Susie is you know how to create wealth, you know how to build money, you know how to build a business. Just do what you know how to do and let everything else go.” I put my head down. I had several private clients. I started working on their business. I took over at Lisa Nichols company and I grew that business from a million dollars to a 10 million dollar business and we took that company public and I just stayed focused on what I knew I know how to do and rebuild my wealth in five years.

What took me 20 years only took me five years, because I knew how to do it now. I wasn’t going through that mass learning curve that I was in my youth of having spending all your money, then going into debt. It was a different experience, but it has been my biggest victory and my biggest lesson.

[0:27:25.7]

FT: Fascinating. Thank you for sharing that. I know that sometimes people are hesitant to talk about the losses, the failures, the setbacks, especially when their whole business is based on coaching people through those things. We really appreciate that. I really appreciate that. Thank you. Wow. Lisa Nichols, that’s incredible. A million dollars to 10 million and then going public in five years, that’s –

[0:27:52.5]

SC: That was over about a eight-year period. Yeah.

[0:27:54.5]

FT: Yeah, okay well still. I love Lisa Nichols, I think. She's fantastic.

[0:28:00.3]

SC: Everybody loves some Lisa.

[0:28:02.2]

FT: Everybody loves some Lisa. It's the holidays and we're approaching the holidays and our sponsor is Chase Slate. One of the questions that we're asking guests this time of year is how are you how are you planning around the holidays this year? What's your financial approach to the holidays?

[0:28:23.9]

SC: Well one, I always give back. I believe that's a big part of my success is I give back and give back to my community. One, I give to my church regularly but two, I'm sponsoring a child in Africa for their high school education. For the next four years, I'm giving him money for his books and all his schooling and committed to that this holiday season to give someone the opportunity. My colleague said that he wants to be a doctor and he's so excited about the medical profession. Just the gift to be able to sponsor him and support him in his education is such a blessing. Benjamin Franklin said, "Take the coins from your purse, invest them in your mind and your mind will fill your purse overflowing."

[0:29:16.0]

FT: I love that. Benjamin Franklin –

[0:29:18.6]

SC: It's one of my favorite, right?

[0:29:20.3]

FT: Benjamin Franklin knew a thing or two.

[0:29:22.8]

SC: A thing or two. It's been my mantra. I know every dollar I invest in my education, I get back tenfold. It may not come tomorrow, but it always comes. If I can do that for somebody else, a child that doesn't have the means to do that, then that makes it all worthwhile.

[0:29:43.3]

FT: Susie Carder, thank you so much for coming on and these powerful stories that you shared really a wonderful way to round out the year, as many of us are looking ahead and thinking about how we're going to map out the new year, how are you going to change our financial lives, can we even do it? You have given us so much hope and inspiration. Thank you so much and congratulations on your 10th book, or your 11th book. I can't keep track. *From Bootstrap to Big Time: How to Take Your Company from \$250,000 10 million*. If you're listening and you think you're ready to go big time, you know what? Find Susie, she's going to help you get there. Thank you very much.

[0:30:23.3]

SC: Thanks, Farnoosh. I appreciate you and I appreciate what you're up to and what you're doing for us in the world.

[END]