

EPISODE 929

“JB: *I think what we woke up to understand late 2016 and 2017 with the Women’s March and everything that has happened subsequently is MLK Jr. says the ark of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice. I think what we’ve woken – I love that quote. But what we’ve woken up to is it does not bend on its own. It literally needs to be bent.”*

[INTRODUCTION]

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FT: How can companies thrive as the world evolves and the marketplace changes? Welcome to So Money, everybody. I'm Farnoosh Torabi. Jennifer Brown is here and she's on a mission to help businesses become more inclusive by creating a workplace where employees can thrive by being who they are. She believes that when employees are able to bring their true self to work, they're able to motivate and contribute in a way that will boost the bottom line, but it's not always so easy, right?

Jennifer is the founder of Jennifer Brown Consulting. She's an award-winning entrepreneur, speaker, diversity and inclusion consultant and author of the book *Inclusion: Diversity, The Workplace & the Will to Change*.

Here we go. Here's Jennifer Brown.

[INTERVIEW]

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FT: Jennifer Brown, welcome to So Money, and congratulations on your new book, *How to Be an Inclusive Leader*. So important, so important now.

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JB: That's right. Thank you, Farnoosh. Yeah, I hope it really makes an impact and finds its way into the right hands.

[00:02:00]

FT: Any hand. Everyone needs this book, right? I think we all, no matter how confident we are and who we are, when we get to work, something changes, something shifts. We feel like we can bring our whole selves to work. It's either a distraction and we're not going to be accepted, or it's not in alignment with the culture, or we're worried about discrimination, or all of the above.

So your goal is to encourage people to not only bring their whole self to work, to be their authentic self at work, but also for the work, for the people at work, your colleagues, your coworkers, your managers, your peers to be advocates for you, because ultimately what is on the line? What is the price?

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JB: The price is the fact that we are not seeing an improvement in the numbers of, for example, women and people of color just to name two that are moving into the executive levels of leadership just to pick one example. When I look at that, I know so much about why that's happening. I think most leaders probably don't know why that's happening. Actually, most leaders would probably say, "What do you mean we have a problem and were losing people? We're doing fine."

But what I see is for each person a sort of history of having to cover at work of putting a lot of energy towards longing are trying to belong, of not having enough role models that share an identity, enough sponsors that are pulling that person up through the pipeline and into those bigger jobs.

Honestly, that combined with a lot of micro-aggressions and casual comments and unexplored unconscious bias that people here on a day-to-day basis, it just wears on you and at some point people give up. They say, "I'm going to go seek. I'm not going to become an entrepreneur. I'm

going to change companies to a company that values this in a more proactive way and actually walks the talk.”

So the price is losing that whole generation of talent that you spent so much to hire that you've managed to keep for so long. Then just to have them get so fatigued that they just can't take it anymore. There are so many reasons not to want that. I think the other problem is organizations' workforce needs to mirror the marketplace that the organization does business in.

So the more folks that leave that look like the rest of the world, the more difficult it is to diversify particularly leadership, but the whole top half of organizations. So it's a real problem, because you then don't have all of those diverse perspectives and identities at the table making business decisions every day about the products and services that are going to resonate with the world, which new flash, yeah, is diverse.

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FT: Yeah. The product is not going to resonate. Frankly, as consumers, there so much transparency now. You can find out with a click of a button who's on the board of your company. Who is making decisions? Even though maybe you don't have a consumer-facing product, but you're in business and you are taking consumer dollars. We can vote with our with our dollars now.

Companies know this. I mean, it's not rocket science. Why is it so hard to move the needle? Why aren't we seeing more women at the top? Why aren't we seeing more people of color? Why aren't we seeing people feeling comfortable to say, "I'm gay. Yes, and I work next to you in this cubicle. Guess what? The work is still going to be excellent." You have a story of your own to share, but why aren't companies waking up to this?

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JB: Yeah. Well, the question, isn't it? I think people get really comfortable and they are not, for whatever reason, even though we've build the business case and there's so much

documentation about why this is this a problem and a challenge that's affecting business, there is still I think tremendous denial amongst decision-makers about how on fire this really is.

Honestly, I know that's a very depressing answer, but there's a lot of denial. There's a lot of unawareness that people even have a problem, or that organizations have a problem. I know that might amaze you and your listeners, but honestly if you stop somebody that is a professional at a certain level and as a leader and you say, "Tell me about the gender pay gap." Chances are they're not going to know about it, and they're definitely not going to be able to define it and they certainly won't know it in their own organization in their own teams.

So we're literally rewinding, I think, and this is, hence, the first couple chapters in my new book. We're rewinding teambuilding awareness that there is a gap, and that there is an experience gap. It's not just a pay gap, or a retention gap. There is an engagement and cultural experience gap in the same company that radically different for certain people of certain identities.

Until we can really explain this in a way that captures hearts and minds of people who empower and who have influence, we can keep pushing from below, which is what I know all those people and I try to be a voice for them and for us, honestly, because I'm in the LGBTQ community and I'm a woman in business, and so certainly can push with people, but I can also get into some rooms and push on behalf of because of my ethnicity, which is not fair and not right, but people may be relatively more comfortable with me the second I walk in the door and be more willing to listen to me talk about these things.

Even in that example, it's disturbing, that there is that unchecked bias towards – A positive bias perhaps toward somebody like me notwithstanding my gender, which actually may hurt me and my LGBT status, which if they knew, would hurt me as well.

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FT: Well, that's it. People are afraid. Being hurt, what does that mean? That means not elevating in your career, being subjugated, being left out of meetings [inaudible 00:08:00]. I mean, there's a lot of fear and it substantiated. So how do you get the courage? How did you get the courage to be you at work, the whole you?

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JB: I think, honestly, the business case really helped me feel more confident in my own identity and the reason why my voice is needed. When I really started to put the pieces together, back in the day, I was very involved in all the LGBT employee resource groups getting set up at a lot of the – Mainly, it was banks, because I'm New York. So there're a lot of financial services and professional consulting firms here. Those were the first kinds of companies, believe it or not, that were setting up these groups, and they've been at it for more than 20 years.

When I first realized that there's a business case for me and there's a business case for our community, whether it's buying power, likes it's Bank of America trying to market to you with the right imagery and the right messaging and in a respectful way, in a way that shows they've done their homework. I realized that that's a source of knowledge that's very valuable actually, and this is where I think we have to kind of shift in our heads to we've inherited stereotypes and bias about ourselves and we've got a really – Those of us who are in marginalized identities or underrepresented entities have to really think about and know that we are needed, we are necessary, we have a diverse lens, which is better for problem-solving at work.

By the way, we are the future of talent. We may not be the present of talent in certain levels of the company, and I always want to say that, because in the aggregate, you may have total gender parity in your organization. The question we always look at is where. Where in the organization?

Do you have all of your people of color or vast majority in a certain call center, or in a certain part of the country? You can't look at metrics across the board. You need to divide them up and kind of look at them case-by-case and you also need to look at the seniority of the data. But I think that all of the dots came together for me when I realized I have a voice that matters. I have a lens that's valuable, and telling my story may not only shift the way I'm seeing in terms of confidence and not hiding in plain sight, but it will also provide a potential role model to people who think that they don't see anyone looks like them.

To me, legacy is very motivating. When I think about legacy, and this is maybe not true for everybody, but when I think about that, it becomes a very clear choice whether I bring my false self to as is many situations as possible, because I know that I could be impacting somebody in a really profound way by doing so. So it's not about my comfort. It's not about my mood. It's about my commitment to my authenticity. I know that that is very pie-in-the-sky, but I do think – If people knew what I knew, they would feel more important and they would feel kind of empowered with who they are and what they know and they would also know that the future is on their side.

[00:10:57]

FT: What I love about your book is that it is really user-friendly. So maybe, yes, pie-in-the-sky right now as we were talking, but one of the steps that you include in your book is about advocacy. Again, whether you're a C-suite level or entry level, we can all participate in this movement and in moving the needle. For people listening, how can everybody go to work tomorrow and help to create a more inclusive environment at work and maybe even be an advocate for someone directly or indirectly?

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JB: Yeah, that is exactly why I structured the book the way that I did with four stages. So we all travel this continuum, from unawareness or resistance, to becoming aware or awakening to facts or both qualitative and quantitative. Then we activate around that awareness, which is stage III, and then we become advocate level, which is stage IV.

I think the first thing to think about is where am I in this journey and in this continuum and being really honest about that. It helps people to kind of unlock the stuckness to say, "Now I know where I am." It allows people to breathe a bit, relax a little bit and also to say, "Oh gosh! Other people are in these places too. I'm not alone or I'm not sort of hopelessly clueless or ignorant or that I don't know about this or I don't care about that."

So we have a lot – I think there's a lot of people that feel very left out or ashamed about their lack of knowledge on this topic. So the book really endeavors to take that out of the equation

and very much invite people to just get on the train. Then I always think of it as even if you just hang on to the caboose for a little while or for a long time, it's okay, as long as you're on the train. Maybe you'll move forward a car at a time, and maybe it will take you a while.

This kind of thing is not a journey that can be rushed, because if you rush it and you – I've seen sort of people say, for example, "I'm an ally," sort of as if you've arrived. We like to say in our world that you're only an ally when somebody who needs allyship calls you an ally. That's a real honor and it's a privileged to called that and something that you earn and you never stop earning.

The journey of allyship, improving yourself as an inclusive leader, starts with small actions, like educating yourself, doing your own homework, not relying on others to do all the work and the teaching for you. Sometime somebody will come to me and say, "Tell me everything about the LGBTQ experience. I want to be an ally." I'll say, "You have so much work to do and you should use me actually as someone to answer maybe some really difficult questions that you own time in research hasn't been able to answer." That's the best way to use me, is don't abuse my time when the information is publicly available.

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FT: If you can Google it – Yeah.

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JB: Yeah, Google it please.

[00:13:54]

FT: Google it first.

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JB: Watch some films. I mean, consume media, read articles. There are so much out there about the business case and about like what women of color struggle with in the workplace. I mean, there're so much that's documented. You should be armed with all of that. Then when you come here allyship, you're informed and you're not being lazy. You're not being a lazy ally or a paper ally as my friend calls it.

Then it goes from there. There are sort of great things and also pitfalls that can happen along the way. There's a lot of fear around this conversation or on saying the wrong thing, around intruding into space that's not yours, of talking about privilege in a way that doesn't make you feel bad because it's kind of been weaponized a bit. Yeah, there're a lot of twists and turns as we go through the continuum.

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FT: Compared to where the workplace was even just 10 years ago, 15 years ago. In some ways, in some measures, we've come a long way on this journey. There's a lot of work left to be done, but when you look back through time, Jennifer, what were some catalysts for change and what can we learn from those moments?

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JB: Well, I always point to – I just did a recent one. I do think that the political climate of the last couple of years has very much galvanized the corporate conversation, because corporations are sort of managing an opposite dynamic, which is that their workforce is diversifying, their marketplaces diversifying. They're finding themselves behind the curve.

So they're actually pushing harder than ever before when it comes to diversity and inclusive cultures and creating a sense of belonging. They know that the demographics are dictating that this should be a priority. I've really seen an acceleration there, and I like to say, I think what we woke up to understand late 2016 and 2017 with the Women's March and everything that has happened subsequently is MLK Junior says the ark of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.

I think what we've woken – I love that quote, but what we've woken up to is it does not bend on its own. It literally needs to be bent. It can't just be bent by a couple of us, and it can't just be bent by people that have the least power in the equation. So that would be my kind of asterisks, and got God knows I shouldn't be asterisking Martin Luther King Jr. But it takes all of us and inclusive cultures actually don't just happen because of good intentions, because of people who are like, "Oh! It'll be fine. I vote you. I have progressive values." Women love working in our organization. We get in there and we find a very different story often, and it's very confronting for a leader to realize that their intent has not actually resulted in any sort of impact. So we got to stop believing that good intentions constitutes inclusion. We got to realize that good cultures take work, and they take work from all of us, not just those of us who are most indirectly or directly affected by exclusion.

I would say that dynamic, me too obviously, huge process at giving many people their voice and making us realize what's okay and what's not okay and we shouldn't put up with it. Then Black Lives Matter and the whole awareness that was raised around police brutality in certain affected communities. I think we're not not talking about race now, but I can say that it's still an uncomfortable and avoided conversation in my experience in many workplaces in the corporate world.

So normalizing, talking about difference is I think what's ahead of us. Funny enough, LGBTQ has become almost fashionable and comfortable for so many allies to talk about. I'd like to see the same thing happen with male allies. I'd like to see the same thing happen for allies for multicultural talent, because we all need to understand each other's experience and to support each other, and we all can be doing a lot more of that.

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FT: Who's doing a great job? What companies are you citing now as case studies, as like, "Here is a great company that perhaps pivoted or made a conscious effort to become more inclusive, or has always has always been on this mission," and that we can now use as model for this framework.

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JB: Yeah. I mean, rather than name companies, because some of them are my clients and they never know when I can really share. But some of the big banks do some incredible things, like one that we work with does a high-potential development program for all of their diverse talent at a certain level. So they're developing in this very concrete way.

Leaders of color, leaders with disabilities, LGBTQ, high-potential leaders, veteran leaders, and we teach a bunch of these programs and you can just see how transformative it is for people who've never been in the room that felt really safe and where they have felt surrounded by people that share their story. So pound for pound, it is actually one of the most amazing ways to shore up your talent, your talent pipeline for people that frankly are at risk and that you need as an institution to make sure they stay and make sure that they're not just resting in place, but make sure that they feel great about where they work and that they feel supported. I love that concept, and I think that could be done a lot more.

Some companies are assigning executive leaders to sponsor certain underrepresented talent, like high-potential talent directly. So sponsoring means you literally are sharing your social capital with someone. You're vouching for them. You're making sure they are taking the right kind of assignments in order to move up in the pipeline. Sponsorship has been shown to be the, A, number one differentiator that would hold the most talent up and forward if it happened more often versus, now, where it really happens very informally and almost by accident. I think organizations, those with power, need to be in a relationship with those who the company is saying they want to develop, and that power-sharing needs to really happen.

Then I'll give you a last example. Believe it or not, there are several of my clients who they send their white male leaders off to a full week program offsite called White Men As Full Diversity Partners. It's an entire deep dive into the experience of being a white man in leadership, and it's a discussion of race, and gender, and your role as a leader, and unconscious bias, and what do inclusive behavior look like. People come back really transformed.

I consider that to be really cutting edge. It's not widespread, but I do know that I have a couple clients who have sent hundreds of leaders through it and it has truly created change from

the top. Not just in assertive cognitive sense. But in a visceral sense for leaders, and that's that you need, is that blend of kind of head and heart to really make it stick.

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FT: Wow! Really investing in your employees' growth and allowing them to just feel like they're safe, like in a safe place. Their employer understands them. We know there are a lot of questions that we haven't tackled, but we want to grow. We want to invest in your growth.

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JB: That's right. Of course, there're all the companies who are doing these amazing ads that we, in my community anyway, we just love it. I mean, Gillette ad about toxic masculinity just took my breath away. I mean, it made me cry. It was like I've never seen this topic talked about in the public, and that was just an incredible moment I think for a lot of people to feel heard around our concerns and men feeling heard.

I mean, the man box, as Mark Green and Tony Porter call it, is so confining to men as well, and it's harmful to them. It's not healthy. So this workplace that was built for a very small subset of our population, I would argue doesn't even work for them anymore. It never did. So we just really have to radically rethink the norms rather than kind of forming to you. I think that we as women, for example, think, "Oh! I need to fit or play the game the way that it's played." We can spend our energy doing that, but we can also question how a business has been done and say, "It needs to look different. It needs to look very different." Let's not keep around any of these old behaviors and norms. Let's really start to challenge them.

I think companies, like Nikes and other one that has some incredible ads that are so empowering, I think that the tricky part of course is when you have ads like that and you really take a stand on a social issue that impacts your employees. Your employees get really excited, and I think certain customers get really excited. Others do not. You also have to be walking the talk. I think you talked about transparency, and like you can't put that out there and then not be doing the work internally in your culture.

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FT: Well, you saw a little bit of that around pride month and all of these businesses with their rainbow flags. On the one hand, that's amazing. On the other hand, there were some snickers, people like, "Well, they're doing that just because they want to seem like they're supporting the LGBTQ community," and they may be, and that's probably not ill-intentioned, but they have so much other work to do when it comes to so much else. Their fees are rendered. Internally, they're not diverse.

So what do you make of that? I mean, is it fair to judge a company's stance if they're not 100% progressive? Where do we draw the line and where do we question the authenticity?

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JB: Yeah, it's a great question. We call it pink washing. Yeah, I think that question was loud and clear more than I've ever heard it in this year's world pride, for sure. I've never seen so many storefronts with rainbow flags. I mean I fit's 50% a year ago, it was 100% this year. So everyone's gotten the memo about the gay dollar, honestly. It's a nickel, but it's true.

Yeah, to your point, that does not speak to all your other practices, and is it is convenient to jump into the fray and not really do the work. To our point earlier around paper allyship versus real allyship, you can apply that to a company too. It's not just individuals.

So it's made up of a lot of different actions both public and private that are undertaken by the company, and you should be able to stop an LGBTQ employee of that company at any moment and saying, "Do you feel comfortable bringing your false self to work? Why or why not?" Does middle-management get it? What's your day-to-day reality like? What do you hear or not hear from leadership in terms of how they talk about this? Whether they talk about it?

So there is so many ways to look at a big organization. There are so many vantage points, and it's not an easy answer. I would say I give personally major points for trying. What I look for is you've got some of the pieces in place, and what I really need from our clients is we want those other pieces. We want to know more about where are we missing the best solution. Where are

we lagging behind our competitors? Where could we be doing better? Or we made a huge mistake and we want to be better.

I mean, I think, honestly that's really like a satisfying client to work with, because there is an appetite for change and maybe they learned a lesson the hard way. That means then that they are in any listening mode. They're in a learning mode. They're in a doing mode. They want to learn everything they can, and if anything, they want to do something faster than they should so that they can get in place and we have to sort of slow them down and say, "Hey, let's build this right. Let's not just do the window dressing. Let's not just check the box. Let's not just do unconscious bias training and nothing else."

Pride should be every day of the year, all these cultural celebrations. My friends are like, "Yeah! I'm a black woman like every day, 360 days a year."

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FT: Not just for a month.

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JB: Yeah. How do we leave that into business as usual when there are so many competing priorities and so much change? That's a great question. It just needs to be a priority and thought of as such, and we're not quite there yet.

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FT: Yeah. Well, you're helping us get there. I want to switch gears a little bit to talking about money. As an entrepreneur, Jennifer, and we wear so many hats. You run your own consultancy. You're a speaker. You are an author, or a podcast host, and am just wondering just like perhaps other guests on this show that have developed clear personal brands, how did you sort of evolved into your current niche and how did you support yourself as you were building this company? Because I would imagine that there were ups and downs and are there any stories in particular that you'd like to share that were really for you very meaningful?

[00:27:42]

JB: Oh my gosh! There's never enough time, so many stories. How I supported myself into this work? I got very lucky in the early days by getting a big client when I first started. What I did with every extra dollar that I had, I had no team the time, I turned around and invested it in one person and then two people, and then three people. So I often say, like the EMyth points out, which I love that book. We need to work on the business and not in the business if you want to grow. For me, I took everything I possibly could even if it meant not paying myself and plowed it into the people that could help me and that had the skillsets that I didn't have. For me, that's operations and finance primarily. Anything that has to do with process, because I'm kind of the upfront salesperson consultant SME.

I built the company that way and I learned a lot, but I have always been very clear that there are certain things I don't need to know how to do, because there's other things that I need to go and focus on that I do best so that I can grow the company, so the company can grow. So that was one decision I made, and it was tough, because who wants to give up any kind of funding?

Being an entrepreneur is expensive. I've taken out second mortgages several times. I would really recommend you get a credit facility, like a line of credit, particularly when your business is looking good. You want to apply for that when your numbers look fabulous and for that rainy day. So that was something I didn't know and somebody had to advise me to say, "Don't you have a line of credit? You're going to need that for cash flow."

Long and behold, as your team grows, there are going to be peaks and valleys in terms of cash flow particularly with corporate client to sometimes don't pay for 60 days or even 90 days. Meanwhile, you have a team that you need to pay. So cash flow is like an art. If you're a business owner, ask anybody. This is what keeps us up at night.

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FT: I have a cash flow Excel spreadsheet update at all times.

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JB: Totally.

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FT: For that reason. People don't pay you when they're supposed to.

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JB: Well, that is through. Those are some thing I did. I've always invested so much in marketing. Probably way more like dollar for dollar than a lot of my competitors. I enjoy marketing. To me, marketing sales aren't dirty words. So I enjoy them. I'm happy to put our thought leadership out there in the world, and thus take a lot of investment.

I have a whole team that just is dedicated to that marketing piece, but I might also say the investment in a book is really, really a game changer. It's been huge for me. I mean, I wasn't an author, but I was a consultant with a consulting team, but people didn't really know me and I think it absolutely just catapulted our image and our reputation forward.

Particularly, for marginalized or underrepresented founders and voices out there, your story so important to be tool. So I'd say, "We need more voices like that. We need more representation on the bookshelves. We need more representation in TED Talks and podcasters and keynote speakers who are at the top of the of that sort of keynote roster in terms of fees. We really, really need to diversify all of these channels.

So if you're listening to this and you feel like you have a book in you and you can be a TED speaker someday, really think about like the importance of that, not just for you for your economic future, and also for that legacy piece you could be providing.

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FT: Yes. Be in control of your content. The barriers to entry really are not there anymore. I mean, you can publish a book on your own. You can start a podcast on your own. I'm not sure if you can get a TED Talk on your own, but you can do a TEDx.

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JB: Yeah. So you do TEDx.

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FT: You can start your own TEDx. You could apply to have TEDx come to your town. So you can really take the initiative and not wait for these opportunities. One other question, Jennifer, about money, and this is a question that we are asking guests in partnership with our sponsored, Chase, and that is what is something that you practice?

You talked about being really on top of your cash flow, the line of credit. That's definitely one thing that could fall under this category, but another thing perhaps that you do, you practice, that helps to build financial security for yourself, and maybe business aside. But you, Jennifer, what's something that you do with your money that gives you a sense of security?

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JB: That's such an interesting question. Let's see. Well, think I think no matter what at the end of the day, whether I have a company, whether I don't someday, because life changes, etc. I think I always keep an eye on myself as an asset and building that thought leadership and voice and a the point of view, which is so important to be a thought leader. Then the books and the podcasts and the other ways that I'm making a name for myself, like separate and apart from being a consultant, which is what I started as and which is the kind of company I have and a team I have of consultants now. That was my origin story.

But I think we've got to evolve, in some cases, past what we originally did. Past our technical knowledge that got us into the field in the first place and think about how can I create this sort of undeniable drumbeat of knowledge given generously? We get a lot out into the world. I've

written papers and articles and I've always wanted to sort of be generous in the market. Helping to change the field, hoping to equip people with knowledge that will help them change the field and keep them inspired.

I do think if you have this attitude of giving and then you keep focused on, at the end of the day, what is your point of view? If you can find a niche that really resonates and that has a long-term prospect to it, a long run way to it, like something that's going to be relevant for a really long time that's very future-focused, you will always have something to work with. You'll always have something you can be writing about, speaking about.

I think about the future of working. I think about how inclusiveness will inform that, and it will become more and more important. So when I look ahead, I think this topic is actually going to accelerate. If I can be one of the leading voices on it and in it, that feels like a good level of security for me. That's not like a financial answer, I suppose. Always make sure to pay yourself.

I know I said earlier, you can skip payments if you're building your team and you can do it for strategic moments, and that just needs to be a conscious choice. But make sure that you're also putting all your money away from your savings. You're trying to put money in your retirement account. You're taking care of yourself. If you need to get lean and fire people that you just hired, those are things you may need to do. Believe me, it's heartbreaking, but you will survive.

What it may feel like it is your business expands and contracts, and then expands again, and contracts again. I've gone through many cycles of that and I'm here to say you survived it. But make sure you keep your footprint light so you don't have office space if you don't need it. You have 1099 talent working for you that is sort of utilizing folks when and if you need them. Really think about running a business is got to be really flexible and you want to give yourself every chance to survive, because if you don't survive, then you're not creating those jobs for anyone in the future.

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FT: Right. Put your oxygen mask on first.

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JB: That's right. Take care of yourself and know you have to come back to just you. There's something you can sell, and that is a viable living for you and no one else. I think that's always kind of the place that you should always be able to come back to.

[00:35:56]

FT: Well, there's an expression. You can make money from what you do and also from what you know. We sometimes skip that one, revenue stream. We just make money from what we do. But what you do evokes so much talent, learning, unique skills, experiences that those also are monetizable, right? So thinking along those terms, I think expanding your income potential and that way is a really great way to think about your career and your approach to making a living.

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JB: I love that. What you know is the thought leader piece. I think that's particularly for women, claiming that thought leader mantle may feel a day onerous or intimidating or like something that you can't claim. It's like you have to give yourself permission to say, "Yes, I actually am paid for what I know. It's not just what I know how to?"

That's a really important flip and mindset shift that I think is particularly gendered, I would say. So just be aware. If you're listening to this and you feel you're playing small or you feel like you have more potential than you're utilizing. Maybe something to explore is what could you know? What do you already know that you could monetize and how are you feeding your knowledge and building your knowledge?

That's what people do pay for. They pay us all the time for what we know at my company, because we know what's happening across a whole bunch of companies. So when they come to us and they say, "What are they doing? What are they doing, and how should we do it, and have you see it happen before?" That's all knowledge, and that's valuable. Really, get creative when you think about what you can actually "sell". It doesn't have to be something so tangible.

[00:37:38]

FT: Jennifer Brown, thank you. The book is *Inclusion: Diversity, The New Workplace & the Will to Change*. Thank you so much.

[00:37:48]

JB: Thank you so much.

[END]