

SFF 168: Alexandra Agreda

[00:00:00] **Heidi:** This is the successful fashion freelancer podcast. I am your host, Heidi, and we talk about true remote freelancing here on the show where you work with multiple clients when and where you want. Not temp job freelancing, where you are a freelancer, but you work 40 hours a week, full time for one brand. Um, that is not the type of work I condo.

And that is not the type of work we promote here. We're talking about real freelancing. You can get the freedom of flexibility you deserve. That is how I built my career in the fashion industry. For over a decade, I worked as a freelancer earning over a hundred thousand dollars a year. It was the only way I didn't pronounce the industry after working full-time as an employee and having my own brand, both of which I was underpaid and overworked.

And I kind of like became to hate what I was doing. Um, but freelancing saved that and it is what I advocate for. And we bring guests on the show here to take you behind the scenes as to like what it's like to be a fashion freelancer, how you can build [00:01:00] that career, how you find clients. We talk a lot about pricing and various nuances that people, no one really in our industry talks about.

Um, and today's guest, I am pumped to bring back Alexandra Agta, who was on the show about a year ago and has made so much progress since she's one of our freelance accelerator students and she is kicking so much ass, um, Alexandra in the first six months of this year earned twice as much as she earned in the entire last year, which essentially means she quadrupled her income four times.

Um, so Alexandria and I talk a lot about the money and the, the financial aspect of her growth, but we also talk a lot about like the, the personal growth and the mental, um, benefits that she has reaped from being a freelancer versus working full time as an employee. Um, she has so many great mindset perspectives on freelancing in terms [00:02:00] of like, she's like.

First I live my life. First. I am a person. I take care of myself. Um, she just took two months off this summer because she wanted to go on vacation and, and not work for a couple months. So she's like, I'm gonna take two months off and not work as opposed to in a nine to five job where you sort of live for the weekend, which is not an amazing way to get through life.

Right. Um, so I'm not gonna do any more spoilers. We talk about so many different nuances of, you know, how she's managing her clients, how she's managing her workload, how she's setting her prices, what some of her prices are. We talked very transparently about the finances, um, and I think you're really, really gonna love this conversation no matter where you're at in your freelance career.

I think you're gonna love this conversation that I have with Alexandra. So, um, if you are curious about building or growing your freelance career in fashion, uh, we have two great resources for you. One is freelance accelerator, which is my premium program. If you wanna get on the wait list for that, it opens a couple times a year.

You [00:03:00] can check it out below and the show notes we've linked it up. So heidi.com/fast or to check out my best free resources to get kick started right now, head on over to heidi.com/freelance. Again, we'll link both those up in the show notes. If you are enjoying the show and you wanna help support us, make sure you subscribe wherever you are listening.

Um, so you don't miss out on any future episodes. Reviews are always nice as well. And, uh, hit me up on Instagram. I am, mm, up and down as to my engagement there, trying to be more down than up as, you know, it can be a rabbit hole, but I'm there sometimes. So hit me up in the DMS or just comment on one of my posts.

I try to reply to every comment. Um, that is it. Let's jump into my conversation with Alexandra. So you can hear about all the kick ass work she's doing and learn how you can do that for yourself as well. Here we go. Um, Alexandra, welcome back to the podcast. So just to give everybody a quick heads up, Alexandra was on the show, your first episode aired.

I just pulled it up July [00:04:00] 19th, 2021, ironically, it's July 28th, 2022. So it's almost exactly a year that we're chatting from when your last episode aired and you emailed me. a couple times over the past six or eight months with some really awesome updates. And I'm so excited to have you back. So for those of you, we'll link to your original episode and people go back and listen.

Cause I think it's gonna be cool to see the transformation from like a year. Right. Mm-hmm it could be cool for even you to listen back and be like, oh, I was, I can't believe it's been a year . Yeah. Um, but for those of you who are just gonna dive into this episode, which you should, and then go back, let's get a quick introduction of who you are and what you do in the fashion industry.

Hey guys,

[00:04:43] **Alexandra:** I'm Alexandra gada, I'm a 3d pattern maker and I help brands launch, um, physical or virtual collections, whatever that may be, um, using, um,

[00:04:55] **Heidi:** 3d pipelines. What is a virtual collection like? Is this.

[00:05:00] tell me about that. That's me ask. Yeah, so a virtual

[00:05:04] **Alexandra:** collection is, um, can be like NFTs. Okay. The trigger word that you're seeing.

Yep. Yeah. That's

[00:05:09] **Heidi:** that's what I was gonna ask. And I was like, am I gonna make a total a-hole of myself by being like, no, no, no, it's a great S yeah. People are doing this. Yeah. Mm-hmm people

[00:05:17] **Alexandra:** are, are launching collections entirely virtually and, um, you know, based on the feedback, that's how they'll know what to bring into production.

Okay. Stuff.

[00:05:26] **Heidi:** So mm-hmm okay. So it's, it's launched virtually, and then ultimately they adopt certain styles that they do produce mm-hmm in the physical form, correct? Yep. Okay. So it's not people like exclusively buying NFTs just to like own the NFT of some virtual garments. It can be, but not really so much.

That's not typically what I'm. Yeah, exactly. Okay. Cuz that's where I was like, wow, this is really, I mean, I know some like the really big fashion brands are maybe doing stuff like that, but oh yeah. Um, people that have like a really big name to run off of. Okay, cool. So give us. [00:06:00] Like, where, what have you been doing the last year?

Like your business has grown so much in a freelance space. Um, you've, you've made some really interesting comments in email to me about the growth of 3d specifically, I think CLO and how brands are seeming to be there was, it almost felt like you said they reached a tipping point in terms of like adopting 3d and CLO.

Um, yeah. Talk a little bit about what you've seen over the last year in, in your freelance career and, and what brands are moving into. Yeah.

[00:06:30] **Alexandra:** Yeah. It's super exciting. Um, I feel like, um, when we last spoke about a year ago, I was working for that, um, all in one, um, just like company that brought, um, you know, from like design to production stuff.

I worked with them for a few months. Um, I've been dabbling with 3d sampling trying to make that a, um, like actual like service, never knowing how to price it properly. Because it's [00:07:00] still so new. So selling it, it was a huge, like, uh, I just couldn't get it to stick. And again, I was feeling like a, you know, I know I was in informing people, but I just felt like a salesperson, like all over again.

Wow. Um, so then probably though about around November, like October, November, just complete like flip, I, I had brands that I was reaching out to like six months prior coming back to me and people specifically asking for it and, um, and like posts that I'd see. Um, and it, I went from having, like, I had consistent work throughout the year.

Um, I was definitely happy about that, but then out of nowhere, within a month, I, I obtained like six clients and it was very active work clients. So, which brought me all the way through. I probably just ended all that work like two months ago. And. Have finally slowed down.

[00:07:58] **Heidi:** So you had like six [00:08:00] months of six or eight months of like solid booked, like, oh yeah.

Mm-hmm

[00:08:04] **Alexandra:** yeah. That's amazing. Yeah. Which was completely like opposite. End of the spectrum of like, oh, I'm like trying to find more work to, wow. I can't even like take a break. Yeah. Which was very interesting, like experiencing that side yeah. Of the spectrum as well. Yeah.

[00:08:18] **Heidi:** And you, it sounds like you went from like trying to convince people, like you said, you were like a full blown sales person trying to convince people why 3d was the right direction to now.

Like everybody just like banging on your door.

[00:08:30] **Alexandra:** Oh yeah. Yeah. I was like trying to do like the sustainability, you know, it's um, faster development, like lead times, uh, like lower cost overall with, you know, uh, lower like sample, um, and. , it was in insane that like, it was the trend that got everybody like on board, like onto the bandwagon of it.

So I'm like, oh, oh, okay. That works, I guess.

[00:08:54] **Heidi:** So what do you mean it was the trend, like, what was the tipping point? You think that happened?

[00:08:57] **Alexandra:** Um, I mean, you're starting to see it [00:09:00] all over, even just Instagram. Yeah. Just how, um, I think now the larger brands have, uh, jumped on board and now that they're fully caught up, um, now it's like, oh, like that's so desirable now.

It's like acceptable. Yeah. It's comfortable to feel like, okay. No, that's not just, I guess just a trend. Uh, yeah, but it's not going anywhere. Yeah. Um, mm-hmm ,

[00:09:22] **Heidi:** I mean, it is interesting in fashion over. You know, decade plus that I've been in the industry. Like, I feel like I have seen a lot of things. Like I think 3d has been trying to latch on for a long time.

There's been a lot of companies that have come and gone. There's been a lot of various tech pack software that's come and gone. So it is always scary to be like, well, am I gonna adopt this thing? And then like in six months, the software's gonna poof be gone or something, or like, is this really gonna happen?

Yeah. But I do think we get, we have hit the breaking point, the tipping point. We're like, okay, it's happening? It's sticking. This is the way of the future.

[00:09:54] **Alexandra:** Yeah. Yeah, definitely. Mm-hmm

[00:09:56] **Heidi:** that's cool. So tell us, I mean, explain, tell us [00:10:00] a little bit about the last six months you said was a little bit of an opposite of like where you were last year, where you had consistent work, you were making money, but you were like, I still want more clients to, oh my gosh.

I'm so busy. Like, it sounds like you were just working like crazy. Talk to us a little bit about the difference in that and like how that felt and what that was like. Yeah. Yeah. I

[00:10:20] **Alexandra:** mean, It's crazy to go from like, oh, I just want like more clients and everything to all of a sudden, like starting to panic and being like, wow, I kind of wish it was like, you know, back in the good old days where I could like take a break almost.

It was like very overwhelming, not just in like the workload, but managing the business aspect. Like all the like administrative, like logistics of it. Okay. Um, just the scheduling. Um, I mean, Google calendars is, you know, shout out. It helped me out so much. Yeah. But, um, not so much meeting deadlines, but just keeping on top of like what every, [00:11:00] like the checkpoint that everybody's at and stuff.

And then having time for myself juggling that where it's like, oh, I don't actually like, you know what I mean? I don't have this time now to learn new skills or, uh, build my business. Everything kind of was on a, like at a halt. and I was just working. So it felt almost very like, like nine to five ish.

Mm-hmm kind of like where I'm not doing anything for myself for my own personal growth. Mm-hmm it's so it was, it was very odd in that sense, because like I learned the, I mean the work, the actual freelance work that you're doing, the skills aspect is only like abortion of it. And then you have the business portion and then like, yeah, you have to brush up in your skills.

Especially 3d new things are coming out every single day. Yeah. So it was overwhelming to like now divvy up all of that time. Yeah. Between it all. So

[00:11:55] **Heidi:** like, I mean, it's interesting cuz you know, part [00:12:00] of, one reason why a lot of people wanna go freelance is to escape that nine to five, like rat race. It sounds like you almost got into it.

Um, mm-hmm. so like, what did you learn from the, the experience in these past six months? Like what might you do differently in the future to make that a little bit better or I, I don't know, whatever the word might be. Oh yeah. I mean, don't get

[00:12:22] **Alexandra:** me wrong. It was an awesome experience. I'm so grateful for it, but like, I almost, it was satisfying in the sense where like, I almost felt like I needed to do that.

Like for myself to know where that line was of like, okay, what is too much? Like, what can't I do like at a comfortable, like, and then what are my other like, priorities? Yeah. That is non-work related and stuff, and how to balance

that out. So I thought that was huge for me to, to really take that time in and realize that like, oh, okay.

I actually don't wanna have this [00:13:00] many, this many clients and stuff. So, um, after that, I mean, I finished it out and, um, Since then it's like, okay, like now I know how many clients are that I'm okay. That I feel comfortable with like active or like, you know, maybe it's just like, you know, here and there throughout.

Um, and I mean, for me, that's four. So that's like literally in half .

[00:13:22] **Heidi:** So you, you were working with eight actively? Yes mm-hmm . Okay. Um, but can I share cuz something you put in the email. Okay. You email emailed me. Um, it was like March of this year, March of 2022. And you said in the first two and a half months of this year, I have already made more than I made in the entire previous year financially.

Yep. Yeah. So you made follow to money yes. I mean, and that's where it was great. That's where it's like a huge difference between like working full time is like, oh, definitely. You know, you might have like slow and FA and like high and [00:14:00] low seasons in terms of like the workload. Yeah. But your compensation doesn't change.

Like as a freelancer, you put in all this work, you worked really hard for six months. And I imagine like, financially, that was pretty big win.

[00:14:14] **Alexandra:** Oh yeah. It was. I mean, I took the past two months practically off. You did potentially without yeah. Yeah. Cause I'm like, well, you know, I'm gonna enjoy the summer.

And that's like a big deal for me because I'm, I feel like I'm a workaholic. So to like actually like dial back and be like, no, and being able to focus on other parts of my life and stuff that. That freedom. I mean, you can only get with, with freelancing. I mean, I would hate to do the nine to five being able to almost batch it, like where it's like, okay, I wanna work hard for this amount of time.

All right. I wanna, yeah. Like take the summer off even it's I've been on like multiple vacations. It's just, I don't have to worry about, oh no. Do I even get the time off? And yeah, it's been, yeah, really great to have that flexibility.

[00:14:57] **Heidi:** Mm-hmm so what'd you do, you went on some vacations. Where'd you go? Did you do anything [00:15:00] exciting?

[00:15:00] **Alexandra:** Oh yeah. Yeah. I went on a cruise. What? Mexico? Oh yeah. Visit family. It's yeah. It's just been great. Like, you know, focusing on like my own, just like hobbies or something, you know, self care, all that it's yeah. It's it's a dream, honestly. It's it's great.

[00:15:21] **Heidi:** Yeah, that is amazing. Um, okay. So I wanna talk about a couple things, so.

talk to us a little bit about, like you said, that you had clients, that you had brands that you had spoken to like three or six months prior that all of a sudden came back. So how were you getting in touch with these brands initially? Were you just doing cold pitching or like, what was your outreach?

[00:15:42] **Alexandra:** Yeah, I was doing cold pitching. Um, let's see. Um, one of 'em I might've reached out to you from your like SFF, uh, Facebook group, you know, how they post the, the job list.

[00:15:58] **Heidi:** Yeah. We share

[00:15:59] **Alexandra:** opportunities there. [00:16:00] Okay. Yep. And, uh, yeah, a majority of col just cold pitching. Yeah. Okay. Just reaching out mm-hmm where it's like, oh, okay.

They're interested, but not so much in the 3d. Oh. They have to like crunch numbers. And honestly there's like some consultations that I did where I'm like, oh, okay, well that, that's fine. I'm never gonna hear from them again. Like I just got that vibe and that's totally okay. Yeah. Like. And then they come back like, oh, wow.

Like never thought I'd hear from you. Yeah.

[00:16:27] **Heidi:** Again, so, yeah. And were you keeping in touch with them in the meantime? Like every three or four months sending a little, Hey, how's things going just wanted to, most of 'em touch base. Yeah.

[00:16:36] **Alexandra:** Okay. Yeah. Yeah. Um, just like sending articles, you know, just relevant sending some value that's happening.

Yeah. Yeah. Mm-hmm okay.

[00:16:46] **Heidi:** Um, would you be open to talking about pricing openly?

[00:16:51] **Alexandra:** Yeah. Yeah. I mean, I'm always adapting pricing, um, especially with 3d. That is definitely a, a struggle of like figuring out how to price [00:17:00] that in fashion, but yeah. Yeah. I'm totally open.

[00:17:02] **Heidi:** Okay, cool. So, um, I'd love to know. So, so financially, I know you said like in two and a half months, this year, you made more than you made in the entire 12 months of last year.

That's massive. Yes. Is that just because you had much more like that much more workload or you had adjusted your prices or what was the main reason for that? um, I think it was a majority just more

[00:17:24] **Alexandra:** workload. Okay. Um, I, I have adjusted my prices. Um, and then even more so within the past, like month or two, now that I am doing 3d.

Okay. That's very different than the pricing of, um, like just pattern

[00:17:37] **Heidi:** making. Right. Okay. So talk to us a little bit about like, where were you at with pat and now you say you're just doing 3d, so have you exclusively niche down to like, I only do 3d. Yeah. I don't do physical samples anymore. You used to do that.

[00:17:54] **Alexandra:** I used to do that. Yep. Okay. Very happy to say that I'm done not doing it.

[00:17:59] **Heidi:** okay. [00:18:00] That's amazing. So it sounds like that just happened in the last couple months that you're like yeah. Officially cut out all the physical. Yes. Okay. Mm-hmm um, so. like, just, could you talk us through some of your, like what your pattern making packages looked like?

Or I don't know if you were charging hourly or by the, you know, pro project versus now where you're at with 3d and like how that kind of compares.

[00:18:23] **Alexandra:** Yeah. Um, so I think last time we spoke, well, I've always been doing project base and then, um, I've always, yeah, like I said, I was trying to figure out how to like put in 3d and the best way I was able to figure out is just package it, put it into a package where it's like, okay, first through, um, you get your first pattern and then maybe like, what do I have it?

Uh, three, three revisions. I might put it down to two, but, um, and that's with the 3d sample, that's non rendering. So just the 3d sample. So you can see that.

And then, um, anything after that [00:19:00] would be hourly. Okay. Um, and that includes, I mean, I've never had anybody need to go past the three revisions. Okay. Uh, so then that's like the production pattern too.

So pretty much first production with three, uh, revisions of

[00:19:15] **Heidi:** 3d sampling. Okay. So would you be willing to share like what your package price for that is? Yeah. Um, Hmm.

[00:19:22] **Alexandra:** Let's see. So it ranges depending on the starting. Yeah. Yeah. Starting would be about, um, I'm like, lemme pull my prices. Yeah. What am I charging?

that's a good question.

[00:19:36] **Heidi:** It's it's something comfortable. I'm making good money, but yeah,

[00:19:41] **Alexandra:** I guess, you know, like everybody's like slightly different, so I'm like, wait, where do I have everybody at right now? Um, it it's about 1200 starting. Okay. Okay. Yeah. Yeah. Um, and yeah, anywhere from a thousand to like 1500 depending.

Okay. On the

[00:19:58] **Heidi:** garment range. Yeah. Like a t-shirt [00:20:00] versus like a jacket or something. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Um, and you said you just recently raised your prices? I

[00:20:08] **Alexandra:** did. Yeah. I, I just honestly tacked on like for the packaging. I just tacked on like a few hundred and, um, my hourly though, I went from 50 to 65.

[00:20:22] **Heidi:** Okay. And how has that been received by your clients?

Absolutely fine. Like, it's not like you don't even know there's a price change.

[00:20:32] **Alexandra:** Yeah. Well, so there's been like a few clients where yeah. I've had to like introduce it while working with them. So I kind of wait for there to be like, okay, like the agreed upon work load. We finish that. And now

anything after that, these are my prices now mm-hmm and it's just been perceived like fine.

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[00:20:49] **Heidi:** mean, very, yeah. Okay. Yeah. That's awesome. That's awesome. I love hearing that. I think, you know, people always feel really nervous to raise their prices, which I get. Um, mm-hmm but. [00:21:00] pretty much every freelancer I've spoken with is like, it's been very well received and like, maybe they lose like one person, but like overall, most people you're as when you're a great freelancer and you do an exceptional job, which I know you do.

And a lot of our students inside of fast do cuz that's, you know, how, how we help train you guys. Um, and, and educate you to do is people are then happy to pay that rate.

[00:21:25] **Alexandra:** Oh yeah. Definitely. Especially if you've already done like a project for them. Yeah. And they've seen the results and stuff. They're like, well, yeah.

I wanna like continue working with you. Yeah. Anything I've I've had people say like, do you wanna continue working with me and stuff? Or like another collection, which has been like, wait, what? Like yeah, of

[00:21:41] **Heidi:** course. I mean maybe, sometimes you don't. Yeah. Yeah. That's

[00:21:44] **Alexandra:** true.

[00:21:46] **Heidi:** but, um, yeah, that's been, what types of brands is it?

Mostly like small, independent startups.

[00:21:52] **Alexandra:** Um, let's see. Yeah. Yeah. It's about, um, Hmm. mostly startups actually. Yeah. [00:22:00] Okay. Not that they haven't like had brands in the past, but at least it's, uh, I'm working with people that tend to kind of at least know how to start a business. I found that that's actually, uh, a great way to find people like to cold pitch too.

Yeah. Like say, um, you know, somebody's like I'm working with someone who's a in automotive owns their own company, but hit my mic. Um, but they

were interested in starting a, a fashion brand. Well, I mean, that's. A green light for me. They already know that how to run, how to start a business. Yeah, yeah. Maybe not in that industry, but yeah.

You know what I mean? They're they know the logistics

[00:22:43] **Heidi:** of running a

[00:22:43] **Alexandra:** business. Yeah. And there's a lot more trust as well with that. Like, so they, you know, they know to trust people and they're not as, uh, I guess nickel and diamond, cuz they know it costs money, they know cost money brand mm-hmm

[00:22:54] **Heidi:** so how do you, how are you like finding that out or seeing that when you're finding these brands to ultimately pitch [00:23:00] too?

[00:23:01] **Alexandra:** Um, so if they like Instagram can help, uh, like just with their presence, knowing that like okay. For example, okay. They're an automotive, well how much more they engaging and like a personality aspect. And if you can sense that they are willing to branch out in other like trickle down in other aspects, like say, I dunno, somebody's doing like home goods.

Well maybe they wanna start doing like clothing with that or, you know, so like just pairing or uh, I mean, I'm not working with any influencers, but that as well. I mean, I feel like so many influencers are now like, oh, well I'm gonna start a fashion brand now. Yeah. And stuff. So, okay. I think that like, just branching

[00:23:44] **Heidi:** off, but like okay.

But like the automotive one, for example, I'm still a little confused. So yeah. Did you just, like you found this brand on Instagram and then how did you know that they had also had this automotive brand, meaning it was a [00:24:00] green light for you to be like, oh, they already know how to run a business and they understand it's gonna cost money or was that something you learned afterwards?

That's something I learned afterwards. Okay. I thought you were saying that you were figuring out a way to find these brands that know they had had a business before and then seeing that as a green light. Okay. That's just so original thought.

[00:24:17] **Alexandra:** It was like, wow. Okay.

[00:24:19] **Heidi:** Okay. That's a good way. Like mm-hmm okay.

Got it. So you learn now learn after the fact that they've already had a business and you're like, bingo, this could be a great client because oh yeah. Duh, duh, da, what we just talked about. mm-hmm okay. Understand. Yeah.

[00:24:31] **Alexandra:** And just the comparison of like working with somebody yeah. That already has a business.

And then with somebody that like doesn't even know, like the terminology of totally, you know, what's a sea it's like, whew. Yeah. The like difference in just, uh, energy yeah. Is like that you have to put in is

[00:24:49] **Heidi:** massive. Mm-hmm I can imagine. I can imagine. Mm-hmm um, okay. So are you, you just wrapped up a bunch of projects.

You took two months [00:25:00] off. Um, where are you at right now? Are you like getting some new projects from some of these previous clients? Like they were coming back with more stuff? Are you pitching again? Like where are you at? Oh yeah.

[00:25:10] **Alexandra:** Um, so I mean, I I've been still doing like meetings and maybe like one thing here or there.

Uh, but yeah, I have, um, a few projects with, um, like return. Precurring clients, uh, starting back in August. Okay.

[00:25:24] **Heidi:** Um, it's July 28th. So that's in like a couple days

[00:25:27] **Alexandra:** yep. Yep. yep. So I'm starting to get like my, uh, like getting back in the mindset of it. Yeah. Um, but also, um, I've been touching base again with like the 3d work learning, um, some new pipelines stuff to clean up some of my workflow, um, and like, oh, the whole business aspect.

It's like, man, I meant to have like a website up in January and it's just like, so all that was put on hold, so, yep. I mean, at [00:26:00] this point now I think with all the just different, um, how 3d is new and all the different types of services and customization that you can do, it's like, okay, I need, like, I need to stop, like sending all these PDFs.

I just need like a website. Yeah. So people can just view yeah. On like one page.

[00:26:16] **Heidi:** Yeah. And, but you've gotten this far with just PDF portfolio.
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[00:26:20] **Alexandra:** honestly can't believe that. Yeah. Yeah. Um, it's like, none of it's recent.

[00:26:26] **Heidi:** like all, yeah. Like you're at LinkedIn has like a few screenshots and like, literally that's kind of all you had and, and some PDFs, right?

[00:26:33] **Alexandra:** Yeah. Yeah. Um, like the skills that I have now are not represented whatsoever in my portfolio. And that's why I'm like, I don't even know how so, I mean, it's a pleasant surprise for them. like when yeah. You know, like quality, like, uh, just realistic rendering and whatnot is, um, it's just that much more realistic, but, uh, yeah, it's, it's something.

And then it's like, well, I'm working on these projects, but I can't like post that yet. Right. Because

[00:26:59] **Heidi:** it's [00:27:00] yeah.

[00:27:00] **Alexandra:** Sensitive. So haven't had any time to do like my personal, uh, projects to be able to really post that. But I mean, so I've, yeah, I've started this month, um, getting back into that. So I'm kind of just like building back up to, uh, kind of, uh, I don't know, be, be up to date, be current with what I'm doing.

So then when I start my projects, um, I won't have to worry about all that. And, you know, I, I haven't, you know, I haven't cold pitched in like at least I, yeah. I don't know, probably since may or June of, um, of last year, but I, so over a year. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, I'm not opposed to it though. I'm, I'm thinking like, well, you know, I'm gonna have all this new stuff.

Oh yeah. I'll probably just send a few things, you know, see what happens. Yeah. Uh, just to get the word out there. Yeah. Get myself

[00:27:49] **Heidi:** out there, I guess. Yeah. Um, although I'll be surprised if you honestly have to, cuz I just feel like the trajectory that you're on, like you're just gonna get repeat clients.

You're gonna get more referrals. Like it's just gonna keep [00:28:00] growing. Um, what is so surprising to you that you got this far was just that like basic PDF portfolio that you haven't updated. Why does that surprise you

[00:28:12] **Alexandra:** surprise me because like, well, because it's not like my, I guess in my eyes, it's not my best work.

it's just what I had. So I really had to just be like, well, oh, well, like I just need to throw something together. Mm-hmm I just need to have something. So like, Ugh, being like, just cutting yourself off like that. And yeah. It's like, Ugh, you know, you're your own biggest critic. So totally when you see yourself, it's like, oh, I like, I can do so much better than that.

Now it's like, not even like, fully like representing me it's so like, I mean, that's what I see. Um, but I think just the, I guess just like the visuals, I mean, I don't, I just try to keep it very like image. Like, I, I honestly don't even do much in like a, you know, when I'm trying to [00:29:00] negotiate projects and turn them on to like the 3d sampling or something, I just send them PDFs.

I was like, oh, if you're interested, this is what it looks like. You know, this is what it is because I, I think just visuals speak more for themselves, especially when, um, You know, people don't maybe know all the terminology or, you know sure. The logistics of it. Sure,

[00:29:20] **Heidi:** sure, sure, sure. Um, okay. But congrats on having that, because having that success with, uh, like out arguably air quote, outdated, you know, like you said, maybe not your best, what you feel is your best work or representative of what you can actually do now in portfolio.

Because I just love that everybody feels like they have to focus so much on their portfolio and it can just become this like full-time job of like, you have to keep it updated. But at the, at the end of the day, I think we put a lot more weight on it then mm-hmm

[00:29:51] **Alexandra:** yeah. Thank you. Uh, yeah. I mean, just get it out there, whatever you have.

It really doesn't like matter. Somebody's not liking like, oh, [00:30:00] well, Hmm. That's not like proportionally, you know, like or whatever it is in your medium, you know, like, yeah. They, they don't have the same eye that you have. They just see somebody like, oh wow, they're working in like the software or it looks like.

It looks like they know what they're doing. Yeah. I, I, yeah.

[00:30:16] **Heidi:** So a lot of times you just need to show that like quick at the glance, like, okay. Yes. This looks like a legitimate tech pack. Yes. This looks like a legitimate, like yeah, yeah. 3d rendering or however you, I don't know the terminology to be honest.

Um,

[00:30:30] **Alexandra:** yeah. Yeah. And just like organization. Yeah. You know, just keeping things clean, looking. Yeah. Simple mm-hmm focused. Yeah,

[00:30:37] **Heidi:** definitely. Um, you mentioned earlier that you like a lot of the business and administrative side of freelancing felt a little, like it got to be a lot, and you said mentioned Google calendar and stuff.

Like talk to us a little bit about what were some of like beyond maybe scheduling or maybe watch the scheduling, like what were some of those, those administrative things [00:31:00] that felt to be a lot and how did you manage that?

[00:31:04] **Alexandra:** Yeah. Well, for me, I just know that I'm not good with, um, like emailing. Like the communication aspect.

I'm very hyper focused in like, when I'm doing work. So then like being pulled out of that to like answer an email, it's like torture for me. like, I can't just like, change, like that type of like mindset. So I've, um, I mean, I only check my email two or three times a day. Okay. I have designated times where I do that.

Okay. I can't have like the notifications or the pings getting me cuz then it's like, it seems like, uh, one test seems like 10, you know, it just being pulled out of that, like that very like hyperfocus or like I'm doing math, I can't do fractions. And then like now I'm having a conversation or yeah. Um, so I mean, it might not be like that for a lot of people, but yeah.

Emails awful with it. [00:32:00] I struggle big time, like even just like, so I do like Calendly, I think it's called for like scheduling Uhhuh. So it's like, okay, cool. I don't have to have that back and forth. So I'm really just trying, I'm still trying to find more automated, like automating as much as I can. I mean, I have like for invoices or, um, you know, proposals, whatever, it's, it's all, there's all these templates.

Everything's a template.

[00:32:23] **Heidi:** Okay. Um, are you just using like Excel or like a basic spreadsheet or are you using a software?

[00:32:28] **Alexandra:** Yep. Yeah, I just use Excel. Okay. Um, yeah, everything's just, uh, pretty much like a copy and paste over. And then I plug in, um, I, I definitely log everything like, so definitely writing the invoices as I'm doing.

Instead of having to like search through emails and be like, ah, what did I charge this person again? Or something like, that's a huge one because not everybody is like paying the same. Yeah. So like, I've moved to other people to like, when I was raising the prices or, or, you know, like some people like I'll give like [00:33:00] a discount or something to if it's like a large project and sure.

You know, I would honor that. Um, so it, it was really just kind of like mentally keeping track of, of like, just, just simple things like that. Yeah. But it's like a lot in my head for that. So it, I just had to be very organized with, um, just filling things out as I go doing those notes, just having like literally a note sheet for that client.

Right. So I'm not searching through emails, so it'd be

[00:33:29] **Heidi:** like, how much do they quote them? Right. Yeah.

[00:33:31] **Alexandra:** Yeah. What are, yeah, what's the status on this? Or so just everything you. Description date, you know, every, every interaction I have with them. So it's just like very brief, almost like listed.

[00:33:42] **Heidi:** Yeah. Um, mm-hmm are you using any type of like project management software?

I'm not, you're

[00:33:48] **Alexandra:** very open to it though. Yeah. Okay.

[00:33:50] **Heidi:** wow. Yeah, that suggestions. I mean, I'll be honest. We started using Asana like less than a [00:34:00] year ago, maybe a year ago. Okay. And I was really opposed to like, I'm the kind of person I can keep so much shit in my head. like, I am really good at that. to, so how did it work out

[00:34:15] **Alexandra:** for you?

Like, uh, great switching now. Oh yeah.

[00:34:18] **Heidi:** Yeah, because I was like, oh, but I could just keep it all in my head and da, da, da, da, excuse me. And I have found that the mental weight has really been lessened. by not having to keep it in my head, like I'm capable. Um, but it's just, it's really helped to get it on paper and then be able to forget about it because I know that like, it's gonna come up on my, it's gonna get me a reminder that this has to get done, blah, blah, blah, whatever.

Right. Um, and, and then there was be like, projects where I was like, oh, well it's a small project. Like, I'm just gonna, I'm not gonna put it into a [00:35:00] sauna. I'm just gonna like, run with it. Right. Yeah. and then I would literally be like 50% through it and I'd be like, why did I not put this in there? And I'll sit down for like an hour and I'll put everything in there and assign tasks and do all the things.

And I. Yeah. um, I like sleep better. Like I don't wake up. I mean, I still do, but I don't wake up as much in the middle of the night being like, oh wow. With your brain spinning on all the things. Yeah. Yeah. Just like having somewhere to dump it. Um, I there's a ton of tools out there, so I think it's just mattering what works for you.

And mm-hmm I was very resistant, but it's been great. So, you know, I, I was, I'm surprised to hear that you haven't implemented something based on like juggling eight clients and like, like you said, the timelines of like, when is this due for this client? Like, what's the status of this project? Mm-hmm like, that just feels like a lot to juggle.

[00:35:48] **Alexandra:** Yeah. I mean, I'm fine with juggling the work. It's just like the communication of like, wait, when did, when was the last time I spoke to this? Or, you know, just like being present, you know, like yeah. Maybe update them on the status, getting update. Exactly. Yeah. [00:36:00] Just trying to be present for them as well.

Yeah. Um, but that's so interesting. You say the weight, the weight that it has mental

[00:36:09] **Heidi:** weight,

[00:36:09] **Alexandra:** it's like it's a lot. that's what I've experienced. Like freelancing. It's like, oh, I have more responsibility. like, this is on, you know what I mean? It's not like, oh, bring it to my managers. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

It's you? Yeah. So it's like that weight, I think just, yeah, it holds a lot on me. Like just exactly making sure that everybody is, um, like updated, like they feel comfortable along with the process with what's going on and cuz there are varying like trust levels and stuff and even just keeping like tabs on that.

Yeah. Of like, okay, this person is okay with me to just go with it. Yeah, yeah. And stuff. And other people's like, oh no, I like, I do need to like go along the process with them or even help them cuz they have questions with what's going, you know, what are the next steps and all that. Yeah. Yeah. So it's just very D like everybody's kind of on a different [00:37:00] level.

And so that's uh, yeah, the, the wait for sure. It's. but writing it down though. That's, that's great that, um, that that's worked for you. I'm definitely gonna check it out. Yeah. Uh, why I haven't done that. Yeah. Right. It's , I mean, you've been busy. It just all happened at once. Yeah. So it was like, ah, I don't even like , I mean, I didn't do it for years putting like new systems into place.

And then, yeah. So like now is the time where it's like, I'm starting to visit that and these, uh, like this next following month, that'll be more, you know, until it starts like really picking up again. Yeah. So mm-hmm

[00:37:36] **Heidi:** um, how do you feel like it has been going with like you charged flat project price? Um, and I know you said it includes like two or three revisions and then anything beyond that, it turns into hourly.

How do you feel like that's working out for you? Because I know a challenge, a lot of people have. If they charge project, but then the project [00:38:00] winds up taking, you know, twice as long. So they're really not making as much money cuz they put in twice as many hours as they had originally anticipated. Um, has that been a challenge for you?

And if so, like what have you done?

[00:38:15] **Alexandra:** Do you mean like putting in twice as many hours? Just like based off of like revisions or like, I mean, it could

[00:38:20] **Heidi:** be anything like feedback from, it could be anything. So it's like, let's say you your rate 65 an hour. And so you quote something for \$650. That should take you 10 hours.

Okay. But it winds up taking you 15 or 18 or 20 hours. So you really made like 40, 35, 30 bucks an hour. Um, which is not like ideal, according to the rate that you ultimately want to learn, earn. So, um, I just, I say this because, okay. I've heard this feedback from a lot of people. I also just had a strategy session with a fast student, um, like two days ago, who was literally in this [00:39:00] position.

She goes this whole, last year of freelancing. I feel like everything took me one and a half or two times as long. And I'm still trying to figure out like the project pricing nuances to get that, you know what I'm saying? I got it. Mm. Like what's, what's been your learning curve on that. So, I mean, if it does take me

[00:39:18] **Alexandra:** longer, I definitely eat that.

I won't like, yeah. Ask for more money. Um, I would just let them know and raise it for like the next time around, you know what I mean? Next, whatever, like proposal that goes out. Yeah. Um, for, well, I actually have had an experience where I'm like, you know what, like, this is actually more involved where this isn't really like, like with sourcing, I don't do sourcing.

Okay. But I felt like, um, a client was asking me like so many questions on like, you know, really having to like, hold their hand through the process. It's like, you know, that's a lot of emails. That's a lot that's lot of time, a lot of hours that I'm actually like, Hmm. You know what, let me just like, look this up for you cuz it'll like, you know, that's doing [00:40:00] like the research for them pretty much.

Um, and, and yeah, I did say like, you know, based off like the scope and you know, all that, it's like I did end up like saying like I am going to like put a, like sourcing fee into our next invoice cuz I just, most people I do invoices like monthly. Okay. And uh, and you know, oh, okay. Yeah, totally understand.

Yeah. Is that okay with you? Like how do you feel towards that? And I mean I've had no backlash or anything because yeah. I mean they're getting a lot of value information value. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Um, when it comes to, so I've always done project based. Um, not, not unfortunately, but. I guess I've especially working with that agency.

I kind of really, uh, learned, um, okay. Like, well, I know it takes me this long and I guess I kind of started out with that doing, uh, like production. Okay. Sewing and doing those previous collections and my full-time job's like, okay, well, I kind of know [00:41:00] how long it's going to take me to do something like that.

Um, and so I've, if anything, I've had the year to just be able to really Polish that I always also just round two hours up. Okay. Or something like just round up with everything when you do add pricing. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I always add a little buffer. Um, I mean, if you do it in less time, that's great works for you.

Um, it's not like client's like, you know, feel you're not ripping anybody off. Yeah. Because it, it kind of evens

[00:41:26] **Heidi:** itself out and some projects go a little over and just comes down the exactly. Yeah,

[00:41:30] **Alexandra:** yeah, yeah. Um, really for the 3d aspect, that's where I've had a huge learning curve and that's actually why I did start bringing hourly back.

Um, so I'll have like the project. And, but there's just like so many different types of customizing of like, well, how realistic do you want it? Like how much information are they giving me of like the fabrics? How much like, do I need to, you know, create a new fabric and stuff like digitize new fabric, you know, all these little things like, you know, is this type of build [00:42:00] for the avatar?

Like, do they need it? Does it not follow? Like the typical, like, cuz even in CLO? I mean, yeah, you can change the sizes, but say somebody's more like apple built than, you know what I mean? They're not being proportional versus

[00:42:12] **Heidi:** a P shape versus an indoor triangle. Yeah.

[00:42:15] **Alexandra:** So that takes extra. So that's an extra life software and work and stuff.

So, so all that, anything kind of out of that scope of just like air bones, it that's when I just start doing tech and on the hourly, because there's really no way to know for sure, like how that's going to be. And then, you know, if they wanna change it yeah. Or have revisions and stuff, it's like, well, most.

That's the great thing about 3d. It's like, it's very subjective. So I'm getting that like artistic feel that creativity aspect. Um, so like the changes though are mostly subject subjective of just like, well, actually I want like the tone, like the sheen of that fabric, just like a couple notches down. It's like, well, that's like just a preference.

Yeah. You know, [00:43:00] at that point. So I mean, as long as they're okay with like, okay. Like I, I give 'em an estimate of like how long I think that'll take. Yeah. But yeah, all of that's just hourly.

[00:43:11] **Heidi:** Okay. So it sounds like you've got, I mean, there was obviously learning curve. You had some opportunity with your previous client for that agency.

You were financing for, to kind of dial in your time mm-hmm and, and make note of how long certain things took you adjust accordingly going forward with clients. And then it sounds like you're at a spot now where you just have these like, um, A little bit more standardized package. Like you said, obviously it depends on the garment, but yeah, it's really standardized.

And then anything outside of that, you're just doing hourly. Cuz there's too many variables.

[00:43:42] **Alexandra:** Yeah, yeah. Especially, yeah. With the 3d

[00:43:45] **Heidi:** for sure. Okay. Okay. And so people who are listening, won't be able to see this, but you're in, I I'm just jumping really fast, but you're in a space with a dress form and um, a bunch of sewing machines and [00:44:00] stuff.

Oh my studio. You're a studio. Is this outside of your home? Nope. No, this is in my home. This is in your home. Okay. Yeah. Um, and you just have this all set up. I mean, you said you're not sewing physical samples anymore. You do you still sew for fun? Like your own? Oh yeah. Yeah. You make a lot of your own. Oh yeah.

Yeah. Mm-hmm you make a lot of your clothes and stuff. Love it. Mm-hmm

[00:44:15] **Alexandra:** oh yeah, yeah. Probably like 80% of the closet or whatever. Quite a bit. Oh, okay. Yeah. I guess I'm like, I guess that's a, you make 80% of your clothes. Yeah. Yeah. I would. I'm like looking at me like probably. Maybe, maybe something I'm wearing, but not sure that's a good bit.

Um, it's something I've always loved doing. Okay. Like that's how I got into fashion. So it's like, okay. Yeah. I, I do need to have that like hands on experience. Okay. With creating the clothes. Okay. Just with, um, doing it for, for clients and stuff. It was just took the fun right out of it. And there's just so much more stress with it where I'm like, wow, I actually don't like doing this, like in a professional sense, like yeah.[00:45:00]

There

[00:45:00] **Heidi:** was, uh, what was so stressful or like not fun about it.

[00:45:03] **Alexandra:** Um, so actually talking about, um, like pricing and stuff, like yeah. You give an estimate, but I mean, it all depends with like the fabrics that they send you. Mm-hmm what it like, how, like, even if they give you a tech back, how good the tech packet, you know what I mean?

Mm-hmm like, so a lot of it's like, oh, so I actually need to really plug in the like blank. Spaces and actually just figure out how to construct this. So it would be different if you got like, uh, like an operations order of operations to just like, here's a pattern, construct it and stuff, and that's fine, but it's really hard to gauge what you're working with and to be able to give an estimate, um, you know, upfront mm-hmm in that sense.

Okay.

[00:45:48] **Heidi:** Totally. I used to do a lot of catalog work when I was a freelancer, like laying out catalogs. Oh yeah. And people would be like, I don't know if you or anyone [00:46:00] listening has ever done anything in like InDesign, but, um, is a multi page layout software. Like if you're laying out like a 64 page catalog, you're gonna put in, in design, there's all these tools to make it more efficient.

Anyways, the point is I, um, I learned that I had to require, I need to see what, what you have existing that I'm gonna be working with before I can price this. Hmm. I inherited once a catalog that was literally. Like 50, 60 pages. I forget. Every page was an individual illustrator file. Ah and I was like, exactly little things like that.

Uh, yeah, no, this is not gonna work. Like I cannot work with this. I will be moving it into in design, which is like a whole nother fee, right. To then like do, because these were like brands that, you know, they had their base items and then maybe colors got updated and then they would have some collections that,

you know, but they had their essential items that got carried overseas over season.

And, and I get it. It's like not knowing what you're gonna inherit on. Certain projects [00:47:00] is like, can be really hard.

[00:47:02] **Alexandra:** Mm-hmm um, so that's, that's fascinating. So you would required the catalogs, like the physical items. to you

[00:47:09] **Heidi:** or were they physical or just digital? No digital. Like if they have previously had a catalog that either someone in house was doing or they had another freelancer doing it, and then I was gonna be doing it for the next season.

Um, and like, let's say, you know, 60% of the catalog can get carried over. We just maybe updating new styles and updating colors and maybe the page order changes a little bit new photos, da, da, da, whatever. But a lot of it just gets carried over. Right. It's file save ads. And then you change. I would be like, I need to see the digital files.

Yeah. Before I can give you a quote, because there's certain things that are just like, even the InDesign file, if it wasn't set up. Right. So I see what you're saying with like, you never know what kind of tech pack you're getting or what kind of fabric and then different fabrics have different nuances and can take longer.

And mm-hmm that can be tough. Oh yeah. So that was really stressful and not fun [00:48:00] for you. Yeah. Yeah. It was.

[00:48:03] **Alexandra:** Yeah, just a lot of stress. It made me like. You're like, oh, good. This is over with like . Yeah, yeah. That's done. Yeah. Stuff where, but yeah, I I'll always love to just, I, I need to be working with my hands cuz I feel like, because I work so much, like my job is just the computer, like I'm at the computer.

So like not having that like hands on experience with a Cal fabrics work yeah. And stuff. I, I think it's very important to, to stay, um, like in tune with that.

[00:48:32] **Heidi:** Yeah, for sure. For sure. Um, okay. So I know we talked about this in the last episode when we did a year ago, but I just, I wanna kind of do another recap of like where you've been and where you are now.

So I forget when you joined freelance accelerator.

[00:48:52] **Alexandra:** Ooh, um, maybe March, March of 2021. Okay. That sounds about right.

[00:48:58] **Heidi:** So a little more than a year ago. [00:49:00] Yep. And when you came on the podcast in, well, aired in July, but I think I interviewed you like in May or something, and you were like, I am earning more in one day of freelancing than I was earning in two weeks of my full-time job.

Um yep. and now let's fast forward a year to where we are now. I imagine that's changed even quite a bit more.

[00:49:26] **Alexandra:** Oh yeah. Um, so I would say that was pretty, um, accurate for the rest of the year. Okay. Um, you know, some months better than others, but sure. Yeah, it was overall definitely and more. Um, and then let's see, like I said, just within the first three months of this year, um Hmm.

I surpassed that. I mean, probably like. I almost doubled that. Oh shit. Um, to this point, to this point, not the first three months, but yes I've

[00:49:59] **Heidi:** but we're six [00:50:00] months in and you've earned twice as much as you earned in all of, in 12 months of last year, correct? Yes. Okay. Um, okay. That's amazing.

Congratulations. You should be very proud of yourself. That's a huge accomplishment. Um, how does it feel?

[00:50:16] **Alexandra:** I, it feels great, honestly. Uh, it's just, you know, I'm just continue always gonna be learning. I, I don't feel like you just, all of a sudden, like, ah, I have this, I get it. Yeah. Like I know how all this works, so I'm just, uh, I it's just learning experience and that is something I just need to, uh, be okay with not having control over every aspect.

Yeah. Um, the money is, it's amazing. Yeah. It's great. At the same time, it. I chose to take like two months slower, but at the same time, like, oof, like that feels weird that I'm not like having an active, like, steady like income at the moment, even though I chose it. It's it's

[00:50:56] **Heidi:** so, and even though you already made like, way more money than you did last year.

Yeah.

[00:50:59] **Alexandra:** [00:51:00] Yeah. It's just weird. Um, like, so just, uh, I don't know, like really, I mean, that's, that's something with me where it's like, oh no, I'm not actively doing anything. I must be, you know, I must not be doing a good job or like, you know, I must not be successful. Yeah. It's just like that common, like, like voice that you have in your head, but it's, it's so great to like, yeah.

Look back and be like, no, I, if I wanted to, I don't have to work the rest of the, you know what I mean? I don't, you know, like I don't have to take on all these projects I've said no to so many and that that's so like it's empowering honestly, of just, yeah. Being able to spot out like, okay, this. like what I want to do, what I don't want to do.

And that follows through like the confidence of that falls through, into like your personal life too, of just like, oh, how? Yeah. Like, well, just having like that, like confidence of like, even just trying new [00:52:00] things or like putting myself out there more, I don't like, or, you know, I'm so antisocial, like, well, I just discovered like rock climbing or like a few months ago, and it's just like such a random thing, but it's like, yeah, I have the time off.

And I'm just wanna like try new things. It's just, again, just having that openmindedness of just experiencing is just a learning experience. So it's, and I found something that I absolutely love. So it's like, if I want to, I can still like middle of the afternoon and if I wanna go, I can do that. And it's, it's very like, yeah, just having that confidence of, of self you're touching base with like, you know, the whole mental health of like, Hmm.

Like, like this is what I struggle with. Like you have. Call yourself out of like, okay, I know I'm not good at this, so this might need like more attention or I'm speaking so vaguely, but you know, or I'm very good at this. And like just creating your own schedule, like, you know, your boss tells you you're working when to go in the office [00:53:00] when you have a meeting, mm-hmm, you know, when you have this where it's like, okay, well I only do meetings twice a week, like two days a week.

That's where you can book a meeting cuz it's like, well, I don't wanna, maybe I don't wanna take a shower. I don't know. Totally, totally. It's just

[00:53:15] **Heidi:** so like

[00:53:16] **Alexandra:** really like having that like trust or confidence in yourself to make those decisions. And um, I think it definitely, um, is fluid throughout every aspect of

[00:53:26] **Heidi:** your.

that is so cool. I mean, I can see how much you've thought about this, which I think is really cool. Like you've thought about these nuances of like, I, well, first of all, making the choice to be like, I do meetings two days a week, which I love, like, I'll tell you right out. I record the podcast four times a year.

I block, I block a week. I love that. Uh, let me tell you, I love it too. I used to, this is years back when we first started, like, we started the podcast in like 2016 or 17. I used to just like, I was always [00:54:00] ahead, but I would just like record here and there on a whim. And then it's like, you're constantly thinking about the podcast or like you, like, you might be, you constantly getting interrupted where like you can't sit down and focus for the whole day or, um, like you don't shower.

Yeah. Mm-hmm , it's that and the mental weight. And now I sit down for a week. I do eight episodes in a week. It's a lot for that week, but then I don't have to think about it for like three months and it's yeah. Life changing. So when you said that with the meetings, I was like, not only having the confident, like not only being like, okay, consciously, I'm gonna do this because this is gonna work better for my schedule, but then having the confidence and even noting to your yourself that that was a confident decision you had to make to be like, I'm gonna take the power.

I'm gonna take control of this and do this mm-hmm . Cause I think a lot of people might feel like, oh, but what if my clients, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. I mean, obviously you can be amenable to people, but at some point part of freelancing, the value is that you gotta take that control and you get call those shots.

[00:54:59] **Alexandra:** [00:55:00] Definitely. Yeah. I that's true. Like, I, I can't really say when that might have switched, but I mean, just as you do it, it you'll start like trusting yourself. I think that's just the huge thing of, um, like, well, oh no. If I actually put myself first. Then that means I'm going to like lose some. And I think that's a huge thing that people just happen to like the people pleasing and stuff of just of people carry with them today.

And it's like, when it might be like also the demeanor of how you put yourself, like if you're not questioning it and it's like, no, it's this fact, like I only do meetings these, you know, two days and it's only within these time blocks. Yeah. Or

[00:55:38] **Heidi:** something it's not even like eight, five all day. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[00:55:41] **Alexandra:** Mm-hmm then, I mean, then that's their options. I mean, that's like saying like, oh, a store is open and those are the store hours, you know? Yeah. Go before the store opens and like, Hey, you know, like expect somebody to open up the door. Yeah. So it's, it's just very, yeah. Like that's, you have to, uh, assert yourself just as like, um, as a

[00:55:59] **Heidi:** [00:56:00] business, as a business, you're a business.

Yeah. Mm-hmm you totally are a business. Um, that's amazing. Um, how, uh, we'll start to wrap up here, but I just, I, I wanna know like, two years ago, you were working long hours in a job that was, I don't wanna put words in your mouth, but it was, yeah, it was, uh,

[00:56:28] **Alexandra:** not the best kind of a dead end. Yeah.

[00:56:30] **Heidi:** Um, mm-hmm you're you were not making very much money.

Yeah. Um, you had no like freedom and time flexibility or anything in two short years, you're you're in a completely different place on so many levels. Like what it, how does it, like, do you ever think about that transformation that you've made?

[00:56:48] **Alexandra:** Well, I'm thinking about it now, as you're describing it, like, yeah.

I had no like flexibility. It's like imagine, okay. You wake up and you that's what you do, you work Monday through Friday. Yeah. And that's what you do. I feel like a lot of [00:57:00] people like live for the weekend mm-hmm and, um, you know, just like that's a huge part of your life is like, To not enjoy or to be working for somebody else or to be like putting somebody else first mm-hmm it's yeah.

I mean, that that's makes me feel sad to think about it. That like people, a lot of people don't have aren't able to do that or mm-hmm , you know, haven't yeah. I mean, they're in different circumstances. I mean, being able to, to do this, it's like, I feel like my life comes first almost. It's like such a big part.

It's not like, oh, I work. And then this is what I do on my spare time. Mm it's. Like, no, I have a life. And then this is like, I mean, I, I love what I do. So it, it helps with that. Um,

[00:57:52] **Heidi:** which is part of freelancing. You get to do what you love.

[00:57:54] **Alexandra:** Exactly. Yeah. That's you're right. It's totally a part of it. And it, it's not [00:58:00] like, and that's sort of like stress and stuff.

Like, I feel like I'm growing as. As a person, like all other aspects of my life can kind of catch up where I feel like a lot of people like that work life balance. It's like they primarily work or like that's their priority or where all their energy is going. Mm-hmm when I feel like, you know, your physical, mental, like just all your like wellbeing, your happiness can actually catch up to that.

And it can all be like, exist on the same, the same plane. It's not like a

[00:58:32] **Heidi:** second rate citizen. Exactly. yeah,

[00:58:36] **Alexandra:** yeah. Yeah. That makes any sense.

[00:58:38] **Heidi:** No, it makes a lot of sense. Mm-hmm um, and I mean, I love too that you're just, like you said earlier, like the doing the physical patterns and sampling, you're like, this is not making me happy and this is stressful.

I'm not gonna do it. Yeah. Like you have the choice and the right. And the power to like, [00:59:00] make that call and then take action on it and still make your freelance career like work amazingly well.

[00:59:06] **Alexandra:** Oh yeah, it was so great. Like saying people. Oh, Nope. Sorry. Don't do that. Don't do that. I don't do that. Yeah. As of, uh, that month.

Yeah. Yeah. Mm-hmm

[00:59:15] **Heidi:** yeah, you should be so proud of yourself, Alexandra you've. I mean, you've kicked so much butt and we'll we'll have you back on the show

again. I'm sure. In another year to catch up again and, um, this is amazing. I'm so impressed with your trajectory.

[00:59:29] **Alexandra:** Oh, thank you. Thank you for having me. I mean, it's I always love, uh, catching up with you.

Uh, yeah. Touching base

[00:59:35] **Heidi:** throughout the year. Yeah, no, it's awesome. Um, okay. Two things before three things before we go one. Okay. Um, a new question I'm I'm starting to drop in sometimes is, um, paint us a picture of a day in the life of you as a freelancer. I know it varies cuz like obviously you were working crazy and then you like took two months off, but average day, what does it look like for you?

[00:59:58] **Alexandra:** um, so, Hmm. [01:00:00] So an average day would be, I mean, I get up early, so I choose to do all like my, um, deep work, like four to nine, 4:00 AM and then yeah, 4:00 AM to nine. Okay. And then from there it's like, oh, well now, already, by that time, I'm kind of winding down for my day. Yeah. So I do all like my like, oh, like intense work.

Um, and so it's just like quiet. I have, you know, those life hasn't like woken up yet and stuff. I have the space to myself. yeah. And, um, so by nine it's like, okay, like then I'll, I don't have some tea kind of like now go down. I mean, I'm in my office and stuff, so I'll go down, you know, maybe hang out with my pets.

I sit outside in the morning, you know, just have some coffee or whatever, and that's nice. I just can just, Hmm. What do I actually like, what do I wanna do today? Yeah. and like, just being able to do that. So being like, well, I'm working till five. It's [01:01:00] awesome. Um, so yeah, I'll plan out. Like, what do I actually wanna do today?

Like not relating to work. And so then it's like, okay, I'm answering emails by like nine o'clock or so, and then, um, I'm having meetings that day after lunch. That's when I have 'em. I mean, again, I still might, now it's nice up. Might be tanning on in my backyard beforehand. yeah. Or something. Yeah. Yeah. So it's kind of like a variable.

Yeah. Just catch up with emails. Maybe do like little things here and there that I need to do within the schedule. And then, um, honestly I wrap up by, uh, by two. I mean, you

[01:01:39] **Heidi:** started at 4:00 AM, so that's quite early. Well, yeah. Yeah. Mm-hmm but still you get

[01:01:45] **Alexandra:** that schedule, just checking my email, like one more time.

Yeah. I like 2:00 PM. So like, I tend to do like more business and like learning stuff like afterwards in the afternoon. Yeah. So again, it's like, it's not just like the work that you do for clients. It's like how to better your business [01:02:00] and yeah. And learning those skills. So I'll do that and yeah, from like nine to two.

Okay. Depending varying and then, yeah. I mean, maybe I take a nap, maybe I call for coffee or something. Yeah. Go to the gym. Uh it's do whatever you

[01:02:15] **Heidi:** want. Yeah. Yeah. Really? Mm-hmm yeah. And you're in Philadelphia. I'm in Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh. Mm-hmm okay. Yep. Um, and your clients, are they located all around the us all around the world or?

Yeah. Yeah. Um,

[01:02:30] **Alexandra:** England, uh, west. Yeah. All, all over the place in the us. Um, I actually have one that. Found me on Instagram. They're like only 20 minutes north of me. Oh, ironically. Yeah. And I'm still like, I'm remote , you know, , I, I don't go in and like yeah.

[01:02:49] **Heidi:** Good for you to have the confidence to be like, this is the boundary that I wanna hold.

This is what I wanna do. Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Mm-hmm I love that. That great. Yeah. That's fantastic. Um, okay. Where can [01:03:00] everybody connect with you online?

[01:03:02] **Alexandra:** Uh, um, well eventually I have a website up, but no, um, I definitely, I checked my LinkedIn Instagram, uh, same. Okay. Well link those before. Yeah.

[01:03:12] **Heidi:** Okay. Perfect. Those show mm-hmm okay.

Awesome. Yeah. And then, um, the question I ask everybody at the end of the interview, what is one thing people never ask you about being a fashion freelancer that you wish they would? Hmm.

[01:03:29] **Alexandra:** I'm trying to think how I answered it last time. Uh, well, again. I think, I think it is still like the stigma that people don't like, if say, if I'm choosing to take time off, they're like, oh Hmm, tough times. Right? You, how many clients? Yeah. Like, Hmm, not good. It's like, well, well, no, I chose to, you know what I mean? Like they don't, they don't understand like, uh, the consistency aspect.

Like I love batching, like you [01:04:00] said. Yeah. Like doing the podcast episodes and stuff. Like that's how I choose or I know I like Excel in that. Yeah. Um, so when I think it, it kind of, um, takes people back when they're, uh, when they see you doing like different things or kind of just like, oh, I'm just like enjoying my day, like out and about.

And they're thinking like, oh, okay. If you're not actively doing something, then that must mean that you don't act actively have stuff going on. Yeah. Like work wise. Mm-hmm .

[01:04:30] **Heidi:** There's so many like stigmas against freelancers, like we're yeah. We're all like eating ramen, living in unfurnished apartments. and like, with like late utility bills, like piling up, like starving.

Yeah. Freelancer mm-hmm it's not the reality for a lot.

[01:04:47] **Alexandra:** No, it's not. It's uh, you really can live a, not even just like, I guess this year, realizing it's not even about the finance. I mean, easy to say for me, cuz I've like hit my goals already, but um, [01:05:00] it's really not even

[01:05:00] **Heidi:** like you had a goal for the whole year and you've already like made that much money.

Yeah. Mm-hmm wow. Congratulations.

[01:05:07] **Alexandra:** Oh, thank you. it's it really? I think the like mental health aspect of just that's what's really like been a huge realization for me this year. Yeah. Um, yeah. That's like, I mean that's priceless. You can't get that in any other job. Yeah. Like,

[01:05:25] **Heidi:** so like you said, putting yourself first and not like just living for the weekend.

Yeah, mm-hmm . That is huge. That is huge. I love it. Great answer. Um, Alexander, this has been so much fun. I've really loved chatting with you. Thank you so much for coming on the show again and sharing everything about your freelance career.

[01:05:42] **Alexandra:** Oh, thank you so much for having me.

[01:05:46] **Heidi:** Thank you so much for listening to this episode of the successful fashion Phil podcast.

I really appreciate you being here and supporting the show. If you haven't yet, make sure you're subscribe wherever you're tuning in and, uh, also a huge shout out and thank you to my team behind the [01:06:00] scenes. Brittany, Tara, Daniel, my husband mark, who does all the tech and editing. There are so many moving pieces and parts to a podcast, and it would not be possible without every.

Who puts their energy and time into making this all happen. Thank you so much. Um, let's see, what else? Oh, of course my things, I always say um, if you want my best for resources on freelancing, head on over to soya.com/freelance, we've linked that up in the show notes. And if you are curious how you can get started inside of freelance accelerator to get all the tools and support that you need, the templates, the tutorials, the videos, the training, the community, access to me and live Q and a and strategy sessions that is all inside of freelance accelerator.

Get yourself on the wait list. It only opens a couple times a year. So heidi.com/fast, F a S T again, linked in the show notes. Um, check that out for more information and yeah. Thank you so much for listening. I hope you're having an awesome day. Whatever it is you are doing. And I will talk to you in the next episode.

Bye.[01:07:00]