

Conjuring Up Courage #124

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Rosie McCarthy

Shohreh Davoodi: You are listening to episode #124 of Conjuring Up Courage. And y'all, I am so excited to share this episode with you. Today's conversation is with Rosie McCarthy, an ex-corporate recruiter and HR professional turned online career coach and founder of Badass Careers. Whether you're job searching, trying to figure out if you want to start a side hustle, or even pretty satisfied with your career, there's something in this episode for everyone. Rosie and I chatted about what signs signal that it's time to leave your job, how to determine if entrepreneurship is for you, tips for the job-hunting process including navigating self-doubt, mindset shifts to help you cope when you're in between jobs, and so much more.

To access the show notes and a full transcript of this episode, head to shohrehdavoodi.com/124. That's shohrehdavoodi.com/124.

[Music plays]

This is Conjuring Up Courage, and I'm your host, Shohreh Davoodi. As a self-trust coach, I help people come home to themselves so they can be more of who they are and less haunted by who they think they're supposed to be.

I created this podcast to celebrate what's possible when you commit to being brave. You'll hear from diverse guests who are refusing to let fear and self-doubt stop them from building fulfilling lives and creating a better world for everyone. I'll also teach you my favorite tools, strategies, and mindset shifts so you can do the same.

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Consider this your invitation to stop living according to “shoulds” and to step into your motherfucking magic instead. Stay open, get curious, and let’s grow together.

[Music fades]

Hi Rosie! I am so stoked to have you on the show today. How’s it going?

Rosie McCarthy: Yeah, thank you for having me. It’s going well. It’s pretty rainy here in Wellington, New Zealand, so it’s perfect podcasting weather [laughs lightly].

Shohreh: Uh, that does sound very nice. It is blue skies and sunny here, so not the perfect podcast weather [Rosie laughs lightly]. It’s like the perfect walk around weather [laughs lightly].

Rosie: You’ll have to get out straight afterwards.

Shohreh: Exactly, exactly, that seems like a good thing to do after sitting in my office for a long period of time.

Rosie: Yeah.

Shohreh: Perfect. So to get started, for those who don’t know you, if you could just tell me a little bit about yourself, who you are, what lights you up, I would love to hear it.

Rosie: I like to call myself a psych-powered career coach, so everything I do is based on the principles of psychology and neuroscience. And I help people figure out what they want to do with their lives, and then I help

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them to take that first step and go and land their next dream job. So very, very meaningful work, which is, surprise surprise, 110% aligned to my purpose as a human being, which is helping people to be happy at work, to fulfill their potential, and to thrive in whatever they choose to do for a career.

I came on this journey from a background of human resources and recruitment. I've been working in HR all around the world, including a six-year stint in France. So I like to think of myself as the OG Emily in Paris [laughter]. Like, I feel that series was definitely based on my life—no, cringe [light laughter]. I think that really shaped me as well because I did sort of have a period of my career that was very much in the training grounds of massive French companies, like the L'Oréal Headquarters, like the Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy Group headquarters. And in seeing those behind the scenes and that competitiveness and that sense of excellence and really seeing what those big companies are looking for, on the flipside, I also saw outstanding talent and outstanding candidates and what they were doing differently to stand out and land their dream jobs.

I've also worked, you know, in tech start-ups, in government, in multi-nationals; I've had a lot of different experiences. But I think those experiences, particularly, made me really primed to tune into both the content of your personal brand and the aesthetic as well, how you present yourself. So there's the whole package going on.

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So, yeah, that's a little bit about me and what I'm passionate about. At the end of the day, it's about purpose and career clarity, and it's about helping you have the confidence to sell yourself as well.

Shohreh: I was going to make an Emily in Paris joke about if your life is as aesthetically pleasing, and then you mentioned you worked at Louis Vuitton, so clearly the answer is yes.

Rosie: Ummmm, well [laughs lightly]. I have to admit I was very much dressing in black and white [light laughter]. Like, I totally did not have Emily's wardrobe. Well, it was interesting because I'm from small-town New Zealand, rural background. Like, I was working in a completely different context and a completely different world before moving to France. And so it was really my first exposure to the luxury industry, and it was wild—it was wild.

It was beyond belief in that, just one example is I was used to training managers and executives in, you know, basic meeting rooms and training rooms in my previous company and just upscaling people, you know, with a PowerPoint slide and a table, right? And maybe throw in some water and snacks, maybe a fruit bowl if they're lucky [Shohreh laughs lightly]. And then you go to, you know, doing trainings over there, and it's like we're hiring in chateaus. And part of my role was to decide which champagne we'd be serving at dinner. And it was just this wild, wild experience.

Shohreh: Oh my gosh.

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Rosie: But it exposed me to a side of life that was completely uncharted for me. But again, that experience and that growth and being completely out of my comfort zone was insane.

Shohreh: Oh my gosh, that sounds like such an interesting experience. And I'm saying this as someone who—all of my fashion knowledge just comes from watching TV. I do not own any fancy brands or anything like that, nor is that, like, really my aesthetic either, but I have an appreciation for it.

Rosie: Yeah, yeah, for sure. I have to admit I got a couple of handbags on the private staff discount just to sort of commemorate that phase of my life. I've sort of got them sitting there as almost, yeah, I guess memoirs more than anything. But the New Zealand style is super low key, and I think people would look at me in a judgmental way if I went out with, like, a really fancy handbag. Unfortunately, we're just super chill and, like, people would be like, whoa, what are you trying to do? You know? [Laughs lightly] It's just super like that. We're not a luxury-driven country at all. I do have a couple of tokens, but I didn't go too crazy.

Shohreh: It really is so different based on where you live. Because I used to be a lawyer, and when I was living in Chicago, working at a law firm there, that was a big status symbol. Like people wanted the designer watches and they wanted the designer handbags and things like that in the city. And then I moved to Austin, Texas, where I currently live, and that is not the vibe here [Rosie laughs lightly]. The vibe here is so casual. Like, it's colored hair and tattoos and denim. Like, a lot of places, like, you

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don't wear a suit to work. So, it's just very different depending on where you live.

Rosie: For sure.

Shohreh: So I will tell you that my listeners have been requesting an interview with a career coach on the show for quite a long time. And one of the reasons it took me this long to actually do it is because there are a lot of career coaches out there and a lot of them that just made me feel very icky and like they clearly did not align with my values or the values of the podcast. So when my VA found you and suggested you, I was very excited because I didn't have any of those concerns with you. And I just think the way that you're doing career coaching is very cool and it's very human-centered and it is different from a lot of the other stuff that I've seen out there.

Rosie: Aw thank you. I really appreciate that because I feel that too and I feel that when I'm looking around. And part of the whole ethos of Badass Careers is to disrupt the way that career coaching and career planning is being done worldwide, so that's definitely part of our mission.

Shohreh: Mm. Fantastic. And I actually polled folks on my Instagram stories on what kind of topics they would want me to cover with you. So the outline for our conversation today is entirely based on listener suggestions. All of y'all had great ideas, so we're going to try to cover as much as we can in the time that we have.

And I'd like to start with a two-parter because multiple variations of these questions were submitted and I think they go together pretty

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well. So, part one is, how do you know when it's time to leave your job? A lot of folks seem to struggle with when and if it's time to move on, especially if their job situation isn't really "bad," per se. Like, there's a lot of people who were kind of like, my situation isn't bad and it's arguably good, so, like, should I leave? Should I stay? And just kind of trying to figure out that.

And then part two is a very common question these days, which is, how do you figure out if you want to leave a stable job to pursue a passion or a hobby as a career, versus maybe doing it as a side hustle or something like that?

Rosie:

Ah, juicy, juicy questions to get started with. And I love that these are based on your listeners' submissions because we can have such a real conversation here about what's really playing on people's minds. So let's tackle the first part, we'll break it down, and to the how do you know when it's time to leave, especially if your job is not that bad on paper.

So, just to give a little bit of context, most people have landed in their careers making decisions out of a place that's not really in full alignment with who they are. And what I mean by that is when you're trying to figure out what you want to do for a job, you ask your parents, you ask your friends. Maybe that one random science teacher that you particularly liked was like, you're pretty good at biology, and you're like, cool, I'll do that. You know? So a lot of our career decisions come from a place of looking externally and trying to figure out, oh, what

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pays well? Or, what would make this person in my life proud? All of these kinds of things outside of us.

And so it's very little wonder that we often end up in careers, or accidentally kind of fall over and trip into careers and kind of find ourselves in careers that aren't necessarily aligned with who we are. Because we're not really asking the right questions about what would suit us from an internal perspective. So what's my purpose? What kind of impact do I want to make on the world? What kind of leadership inspires me? How do I love to learn and grow? And all of these big questions. What this means is that you can be in a perfectly great job on paper—and I'm sure you experienced this when you were a lawyer—

Shohreh: Oh yeah.

Rosie: —where you've got the status and you've got the money and you've got the prestige and your parents are proud, and, you know, people are like, ooh, shiny! You know, and you've got all of those compliments, and so society kind of reinforces it. And there's a concept that I want your listeners to be aware of, which is gratitude shaming. And gratitude shaming is when you shame yourself because you should be grateful. Other people have it worse. Other people don't have a job. Other people don't have as high a paying job, etcetera, etcetera. And it's really when you shame yourself for wanting more just because you have that okay.

And can you imagine saying to a close friend of yours when they're talking to you about their partner and they're saying, you know, the

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relationship's okay. Like, there's no spark, and it doesn't get me out of bed in the morning, etcetera, etcetera, but, you know, I know I should be grateful because at least we don't fight all the time. Or whatever it is. It's sort of like that lackluster. It wouldn't really be okay—you wouldn't say that that's okay to your best friend. So why is it okay to have that in a relationship where you spend 40 hours per week?

So what I'm saying is how do you know when you might want to leave this job even if you're being paid well, even if you have a shiny title, even if you're in an industry that seems safe, even if, you know, insert excuse here [Shohreh laughs lightly]? There's a couple of main criteria, and I would say the first is you're feeling underutilized or under-stimulated—so you've hit a bit of a growth ceiling. That's really important.

I love that quote, "if you're not learning, you're dying." I really believe that. I think there's too many talented people with so much potential being wasted in roles that just aren't using their talents. And think about the ripple effect on society if everyone was using their talents for good and making a massive contribution because they were in the right place. And then imagine the opposite of that, right, of these incredible people wasting away. So that's the first one. And so it's that under-stimulated, underutilized, wasting your potential, or that feeling, maybe, that you're wasting your time where you are.

The next sign could be that you have a nagging voice inside of you, just a gut feeling, that little voice that won't go away saying that you're made for more. You are made for more. More impact, more

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contribution, there's something else out there. And maybe you don't know what it is, but there's a voice telling you there's something there and something's out of alignment. And that's important; that's the intuitive note that you need to listen to.

And then, of course, the typical reasons I would cite: toxic environments. So if in any way your company makes you feel small, makes you feel anxious, makes you feel consistently burnt out with no ability or support to change that, etcetera, absolutely a sign to move on.

And then another one that I don't think many people talk about enough is loss of faith in the leadership or in the ethics of the company.

Sometimes you get in and you see things that make you feel jaded. Or sometimes you change and your values shift in some way and it just doesn't align with the values of the company anymore. And as much as you can try and force it—I'll use the example of L'Oréal.

For example, someone working at L'Oréal in the beauty and cosmetics industry, I mean, sub context: if beauty companies sell their cosmetics and sell their products in China, the Chinese government, it's part of the regulations there, they will test those products, sometimes on animals. And this goes for not just L'Oréal, it can go for all sorts of companies, including ones that claim that they're ethical and etcetera and don't test on animals. But if they're selling their products in any way, which way, whatsoever in China, the Chinese government does test those products. And so they can say that *they're* not testing, but at

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the end of the day, they're allowing it to happen through being in that market.

So if that is impossible for you values-wise, as shiny as your job is there, as shiny as the pay is, as shiny as the leadership is, all of those things, you are not going to be happy. You cannot be happy when your values are constantly out of alignment. So those are kind of some signals, I guess, in terms of when it might be time to leave a job.

Now, in terms of pursuing a passion or a hobby, a couple of things I would say here versus, you know, a side hustle. First and foremost, please don't try to monetize your passion or hobby just because it's your passion or hobby.

Shohreh: Amen.

Rosie: That career advice "follow your passion" is shit [laughter]. It is the worst advice. It doesn't take into account the fact that most of us are either multi-passionate, or some people just don't have one compelling passion and that's completely normal and fine. And that also doesn't take into account the fact that some passions don't pay well, right? And so in monetizing that hobby or in monetizing that passion, you're not actually setting yourself up for maybe some part of your needs or your desires that need to get ticked off. So not every hobby and not every passion needs to be monetized.

Now, in saying that, let's talk about starting a side hustle, which is something different to following your passion. It is creating a business. Creating a side hustle is becoming an entrepreneur. From the day that

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you start that, even if it's "just a side project," or "it's my little thing on the side," no, you're becoming an entrepreneur. And just like all of my career advice, entrepreneurship doesn't suit everyone just like being a doctor doesn't suit everyone, being a lawyer doesn't suit everyone, being a chef doesn't suit everyone. So firstly, you've got to ask yourself, what's your big why for doing this? And will it suit you? Is it aligned to your strengths?

So, for example, if you want to become a podcaster, does that vibe with you to do constant research, constant listening, create a shit ton of content [Shohreh laughs lightly], always be educating yourself, always be interviewing people, always be on the listening side of things, you know, that kind of thing. Designing programs, designing courses. Like, does that align with your skillset? And is it values-aligned? Like, do you love the idea of working remotely and working alone most of the time? And yeah, you're in conversations and you're chatting with people all the time, but at the end of the day, you're at your desk doing the thing alone, right? So you've got to ask yourself, like, do all of those things suit you before even thinking, what am I gonna do here?

Shohreh:

Just on the entrepreneur point, in general, I constantly am telling people, I'm like, it is not for everyone. A lot of what you see online is like this glorified, fancy, not-realistic version of what it actually means to be an entrepreneur day-to-day. And I think not enough people equate side hustle with becoming an entrepreneur and all the questions that you have to ask yourself if you want to do that. Because y'all, it might be a side hustle, but chances are, it's going to take a lot of your time.

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And if you're also working a full-time or a part-time job while you're trying to do that, like, all the sudden you're working a lot of hours a week.

Rosie:

You have to really want it. Let's be honest. I mean, you're right, it's like sacrificing, like, mornings, weekends, evenings. Like, before Badass Careers, I started a YouTube channel about French culture and French language and I was working 80 hours a week because I was working 50, 60 for L'Oréal and then doing my side hustle on top. And I was like that for a year. It's like, you really do have to really want it, and I think the big question is: is it the right thing to do for this phase of life? I mean, obviously if you keep your day job, that's less risky, but it can be risky if you decide to go all in. Sometimes it feels like there's low profit margins up front until things get humming and all of that kind of thing.

And in saying that, though, maybe the payoff, the potential payoff, is absolutely worth it. So in my personal example, what gave me the why, what gave me the drive, that resilience to just keep going and make it happen is that I'm married to a French guy and I hate the thought of being stuck, right, in like one country or the other. Like, I remember being in France and having to ask my boss, you know, may I please have annual leave to go home and see my mom, you know? And it just seemed so claustrophobic after five or six years over there, and I was like, I need that location freedom. So that's my big driver and that's what gets me waking up every day and making this happen.

But yeah, I think to your point, absolutely having a big why and having it suit who you are as a person is fundamentally important.

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Shohreh:

And I wanna go back to a couple of the things that you said with your answer to part one as well 'cause you were definitely speaking my language as a self-trust coach when it comes to getting in touch with who you are, what you want, your values, trying to align your life with those, like, all of those things are so important and I talk about them a lot.

So the first thing I wanna go back to is how you said that so many of us end up in jobs or careers because we look externally, because of what somebody else said to us or encouraged us to do. Because twice in my life before I started doing what I'm doing now, that was the situation that I was in. I got a degree in music initially because I was really good at it and people were like, you're so good at this, you should make a career out of it. And had I really stopped to asking myself, like, hey, do you want the realities of being a professional musician? I would have realized no, no I don't. Like, I'm passionate about this thing, and as soon as it became, like, my career, like, the thing I needed to do for money, I hated it. And I hated all the other stuff that came with it. Like, I always tell people, I loved performing, but that is one part of being a professional musician. Like, there's so much other stuff. And all the practicing alone that goes into it. And so, you know, that was not my best choice there.

And then, I went to law school, which was inspired by me trying to figure out what the heck I want to do with my life and a friend of mine literally being like—this was a friend who was in law school—she was like, but you're really great at, like, reading and writing and speaking

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and all of these things, I think it'd be a great career for you. And that was the catalyst for me deciding to go to law school.

Like, now, I can look back and be like, these are not good reasons. But I think when you don't know what else to do and there's so much pressure to figure that out, especially when you're younger and you really haven't even figured yourself out yet, it's hard. Those are the things that you go on because no one ever told you, hey, here are the things to maybe think about and look for. Like, all of that list of things that you suggested, no one ever said that to me when I was between the ages of, like, 18 and 25, about hey, when you're thinking about your career, these are the things you might want to consider.

Rosie:

Yeah, so true. And that's such a common story. And that's how most people end up doing what they're doing. And that's why it's like, it's really rolling the dice, right? Like, how much power are you giving, you know, your friend in that example to be like, hey, you should be a lawyer! And you're like, okay. You know? Putting in the time, putting in the money, changing your life, it's massive. And it's such a shame that we get all the way through school and we have so much pressure to get the grades and pass that trigonometry test and do this and do that. And it's like, that lack of support in helping us figure out what to do with it all and where to go and what would suit us.

Thank you for sharing your story about how it felt to actually turn your passion into a career. Because it's true, like, what if you have the musician, but you also have the admin and, you know, the finance side of things, and the management side of things, and the XYZ. It really

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does start to feel like a job sometimes, and sometimes you need that release from that passion, right? That's just part of who you are, but it's not necessarily what you need to do 40-plus hours per week.

So, yeah, it is such a shame that we don't have that support earlier on in life, for sure.

Shohreh:

Yes. And I think so many of us do things just because we're good at it. And I wish that more people would stop and realize that being good at something alone isn't a great reason to do that thing as a career, or even necessarily like, a passion or a hobby. You need more than that. It is not enough to just be good at something.

Like, I was actually just having this conversation with my girlfriend the other day because over the pandemic she took on a personal project of recording an audiobook for a book that she really liked that didn't have an audiobook. She loved this book, she got in touch with the author, and she put together this audiobook. And people have really, really loved it, and they have been asking her to record other books now from this author, in particular one that she's just not as big of a fan of and not as passionate about.

And she was saying, oh yeah, I should probably get around to start recording that. And I was like, but do you want to record it? 'Cause just because all these people are telling you, hey, you did a great job, now can you please record this one? I was like, this is your time and your energy. You're not getting paid to do this. So do you wanna do it?

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Like, we really have to ask ourselves these kinds of questions instead of just taking other people's word for it that, like, oh, you're great at it so you should just do it.

Rosie:

Yeah, absolutely. And I think what you're touching on here is exactly—what I teach my program, it's a framework to get that clarity, and I'm not gonna lie, like, it takes a couple of months of work, you know, six-to-eight weeks on average. Because strengths or skills are one part of the puzzle. Passions: one part of the puzzle. Values: one part of the puzzle. There are so many different puzzle pieces you need to collect and then put together to start seeing the options emerge for you.

So if you just take your strengths in isolation, you could ideate a whole list of career options, and then the same for your values, and it might look like a completely different list if you just took the values part, if you just took your passions, and so on and so forth. That's what we need to teach people is how to integrate their whole self into this career decision.

Shohreh:

Absolutely. It can't just be one piece of us, which is so often the way that we go about making career decisions, is just this one aspect, so I love that kind of more integrated approach that you're taking.

And one other thing I want to spotlight quickly before we move onto the next question is you said something very profound, which was that one reason to leave your job or your career could be that there is a voice inside of you saying that you are made for more. And I just want

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to say that that is true not just for your career, but for anything in your life that might need changing.

Because my listeners know that I went through a divorce a couple years ago at this point, and one of the main things was that I just kept hearing this voice in my head that was saying, there's gotta be more out there for you; this is not enough. Like, just this gut feeling, gut sense, that if I stayed, I was settling and I was not living up to my full relationship potential.

We wanna ignore that voice whenever it pops up. Like, we wanna squash it down and be like, nope, everything's fine. We try to tell ourselves that just that voice isn't reason enough, right? This goes back to the idea of like, but my job is good, it's fine. The gratitude shaming. It is so easy for us to do that, be like, but I have it better than other people so I should just be fine. And it's like, if your body is telling you that, if that voice is piping up, there's a reason. And exploring what that reason is can change your entire life.

Rosie: Oh, absolutely. Because it's inconvenient, right? It's inconvenient when that voice comes up because you're like, ugh, now I have to take action. You know you have to change something. And you know that it may not be going according to your little plan that you had in mind [Shohreh laughs lightly] and maybe you've had in mind since you were, like, 18 years old, so wise.

Shohreh: Ugh, so true.

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Rosie: You know, we think that we can control these things and plan it out. And like, you know, other people get divorced, but I'm different. You know, all of these things, right? All of these stories. Like, I'm in control. I can high achieve this relationship and that's not quitting and that's not failing. Same thing for a career, or as you said, so many different other areas of life. And it's actually like, you know what? Success and true alignment and fulfillment, it comes from making those tough decisions and being—people throw around the word authentic all the time, but being authentic to you, there really is no better freedom. There's no better feeling. There's no better feeling of just absolute, yeah, just peace really. Inner peace.

Shohreh: Right, and you have to go through some shit to get to that point.

Rosie: Oh, for sure.

Shohreh: Which is why we're all like, oh god, do I really wanna do this? Do I not? So if you're someone where you hear that voice and you've been ignoring it or you've been trying to talk some reason into yourself, like, there's nothing to be ashamed of in that 'cause that's what we're taught. And also, change is really, really hard. But I just wanna tell people, like, that voice is so important and it's worth listening to. It's there for a reason. You don't have to try to minimize it or pretend. And at the end of the day, you get to decide what choices you make and what changes that you wanna have, but do yourself the favor of at least exploring what's going on there.

Rosie: Ugh, I'm so with you. Yep. Yes, yes, yes.

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Shohreh: Yes. Okay, moving onto some of our other listener questions, I received a lot of questions about the actual job-hunting process and the experience. So I'm gonna start a little more general and then I will shift to a very specific question I got that I think is important and a lot of people struggle with.

But to start, could you talk generally about some of your best tips for things like going through the application process, putting together a resume, maybe where to actually look for a job. Because it seems like now, there's so much stuff on the internet, people are like, I don't even know where to go or who's gonna see my stuff. I've heard a lot of points about the electronic reading of resumes and companies not even seeing a lot of the applicants and stuff like that.

So, I know that's very large and broad so I'll let you take it wherever you wanna go. But whatever you think listeners could use most, I will hear it.

Rosie: Yeah, absolutely. This is a big question and there's a lot. I mean, I've been putting up content for like two years on this topic and I'm not even halfway done [laughs]. But to give you a general insight, I would say two major things to focus on. The first would be your personal brand. Your personal brand is alluding to what we were speaking to earlier, which is really grounded in self-awareness. Who are you? What do you do differently? What's that sweet spot between your strengths, your values, your energizers, and your passions, and your critical life experiences that makes you who you are?

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And articulating that story. Having a powerful personal brand means resumes, cover letters, LinkedIn profiles, they all flow out from that. So if you start there and make sure you sound different, that's so important. Because I can tell you firsthand, as a recruiter, just say you received 300 applications, 280 of them are going to say the same thing. They're gonna say I'm a passionate team player who loves learning and growth, who's a great communicator, who has fierce attention to detail. Like, they all sound the same, like a resume template that's been downloaded off the internet. And so saying something different and knowing your quirks and knowing your value add is so important.

And then the second thing to focus on is really around the human connection piece because there are a lot of roles that never get advertised. There are a lot of roles getting filled through the back door and through internal referrals. And you don't need to be somebody's best friend to get a referral; you just have to be a loose connection, they have you in mind. Maybe you've chatted once, and they know that you're looking for that exact kind of role.

I mean, I'm hesitating throwing out the word "networking" because it makes people cringe [Shohreh laughs lightly]. And I think it makes people cringe because networking is usually associated with just getting something out of someone. So what I would love to encourage is to genuinely connect with people in your dream companies, dream industries, and really get to know them and get to know what does it feel like to work there? Because maybe working at Disney doesn't feel so Disney, right? And you have to learn about that to know that.

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And so have connections, have conversations, and honestly, it's very organic. If you hit it off and you vibe with someone and it feels good, they'll keep you in mind or they may even say, hey, can I send your resume through to HR? What are you looking for right now? And that's gonna be one of your most powerful tools, as well, to access a lot of great opportunities out there at the moment.

Shohreh:

Mm. This reminds me of a good friend of mine who is an attorney, and she and I actually used to work together here in Austin many years ago at this point, but she always had this dream of being a lawyer for LucasFilm. And she ended up moving out to California, she worked at other firms there first, but she started networking with folks from LucasFilm early, just trying to meet people, get in the door in that industry. And eventually, she did get a job there. And she had one of the, like, higher ups, who was also a woman of color like her, who went to bat for her to help her get, like, this special job created for her and stuff. So this was a many years' long process, but this is a thing, like, that really does make a difference.

And like you said, she wasn't initially doing it with, like, hey, hey, give me a job because she knew, like, that was not gonna pan out for her. But to learn, like, what would it take to work there? What would it be like to be there and to just start meeting those people and talking with them? And she built genuine relationships that eventually got her her dream job.

Rosie:

Yeah, absolutely. And I think this links back, as well, to her having that clarity of what she wanted. Because we've only got limited time and

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energy, right? So you've got to be precise. You've got to have precision in the people that you identify as really great humans to have conversations with and learn more from. And so to have that precision, you've got to have that clarity.

And that reminds me of one of my clients, Emma. So she was a lawyer and wanted to get to D.C., but she had a background in science; her bachelor's degree was in science. So she really wanted something that fused the legal side of things with science and technology, she was very futuristic, wanted an innovative component as well. And her husband was French and she was fluent in French, so she was like, I also want a place that's going to allow me to use my French.

So, you know, she started to have, you know, there were other criteria as well, but there were quite a few things on her checklist, and through being that precise and that sort of detailed, she was able to find just a couple of firms. Not a hundred; she wasn't doing mass outreach, we're not talking about cold calling here. She found a couple of firms that really spoke to everything that she was after. For example, they had a global presence with an office in Paris, etcetera, etcetera.

And so she contacted a few people there, and one of the conversations she had, the person turned around and said, hey, I've really loved our conversation today and I'm actually moving on in two months. And to be completely transparent, I think that you would be incredible to replace me. And she had that internal referral, they didn't even advertise the role externally, and she was able to go through still an interview process, but she landed an absolute dream job. And just the,

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like, absolute, to boot, she got a 100% pay raise as well because she was going from really small-town USA to, you know, D.C. and all of that kind of thing. And I just think stories like that, you're like, why wouldn't you? You know? Why wouldn't you?

Shohreh:

It's interesting because you mentioned, and I've found this to be true in my life too, that the more general you are, the less that that is going to stand out for a job. The more that you're kind of like, I can do all the things, and blah, blah, blah. Like, people seem to be really afraid, though, that if they are specific, if they are very clear about these things they want or that they have, that that will make them less marketable.

But in my experience, that's been the opposite as an entrepreneur. The more that I've niched down, the more that I've found better clientele. And from what you're saying, it sounds like in looking for jobs, too, like, the more that you can be clear about who you are and what you bring to the table, the more likely it is that you're gonna find the kind of job that you actually want and that you will be able to be picked out of that pile of resumes.

Rosie:

Absolutely because the recruiter wants to feel like they found the perfect person for the role, right? And so it's exactly the same as entrepreneurship and that niching down is so powerful because it's that same feeling of, I found my person. Right? I found my people! Like, we're the same in that way in that we're on the same mission, we want the same things. Like, that dream you have and that way you want to evolve in your career, we do that around here. So there's that match element.

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I just want to preface, though, this does not mean you need to be niche in skillset. You can niche down to be, I'm the generalist. I'm the person you can give anything to and I'll get people from seven different teams in a room and I'll make it happen. Like, that can also be your secret sauce. And I don't mean niche as in you have to get into data analytics, it's about niching into really what makes you you, but articulating that and standing out as a spiky star.

The reason entrepreneurs don't want to niche down is because they're scared that they'll lose out on market, right?

Shohreh:

Mmhmm.

Rosie:

If I niche down to only serve women of color, what about other women? Those sorts of questions. Okay. And then it's sort of like, well, those women of color who come across your page, they'll resonate with you, they'll feel safe, they'll feel home, they'll feel seen, they'll feel heard. And you're gonna have quality people in your community who vibe with you.

And it's exactly the same in a career transition, it's like, it's trying to find your people, it's trying to find the few places—not spray and pray, right, not sending your application out to a hundred different places and just hoping something lands; that's not how we do job searching anymore. It's about finding fewer quality places that align to exactly what you want and having conversations with those places or pulling together outstanding applications for those places. And so quality over quantity and niching down every time.

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Shohreh: Okay, so I think this is a perfect segue to one of the specific questions that I got that I think a lot of folks have this question. So, many people feel really deflated when they are reading these job listings that they are so interested in, think they'd be great for this company, but it seems like their skills and experience are not a perfect match for that bullet pointed list on there that the employer is saying they're wanting or that they're saying is required.

Can you address that? Because I think that this feeling of doubt, of the impostor syndrome, especially affects marginalized folks. So, women, queer folks, people of color. Versus, you know, a lot of white straight men out there are like oh, I don't have half of these skills, don't care, I'm applying anyways.

Rosie: Yeah, absolutely. And you hit the nail on the head; that's exactly what the research says. So you may have heard of this saying, but it's true, that men, white men in general, will apply for a role when they match around 60% of the criteria as listed on the bullet pointed list. Whereas it takes women, and as you said, marginalized folks, the women of color, the queer folks, etcetera, they usually feel like they have to have at least, I mean, 100%, if not more. So they'll look at every bullet point on the list and if they see one that they don't have, they're like, I'll never get it. They're not going to take me. Because I suppose they're also having come from a context of constantly having to go above and beyond just to be accepted at the normal level, right? And so of course they're coming from that place.

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What's really cool is I've seen some employers starting to say, have a disclaimer at the bottom of their job ads saying, this is a wish list, studies show that men will apply when they hit 60% of what's on this list. So if you feel like you have at least 60-70%, please apply. And that's exactly my advice as well.

What I would say is that a lot of us are very down on ourselves and what we've done and we say, oh, it's nothing special. Because we're suffering from comparisonitis and we're looking left and right and thinking oh, they've done that, they've done that, I'm not as shiny. You really, really—I mean, this goes back to confidence and mindset, right? You really have to anchor into the fact that there's no one else on this planet like you. As cheesy as it is, no one has had your unique combination of critical experiences in life, life stories, turning points. No one has your unique combination of those strengths and those values and all those things we've been talking about

So you are so unique, I would love you to draw out who you are fundamentally. Not look at, like, a list of skills. Skills are teachable. You can learn how to—you know, if they need Adobe Photoshop, you can learn Photoshop. You know, do a couple of videos on YouTube and put down that you're a beginner. Like, you can learn that stuff. But have confidence in really who you are as a person and those transferable skills and competencies that have come from all the different things that you have done. And I'm not just talking about work. I'm talking about volunteering, your side hustle projects, you know, personal things that you've done.

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One of my clients recently, she was working as an accountant and she really wanted to get into something to do with female empowerment and justice and helping women rise up essentially. One of the things that we put on her resume was the fact that she led a massive protest and manifestation around some abortion laws in her home country of Australia. And long story short, by drawing that out and drawing out the skills that it took to pull people around a common cause, to organize the event, to get in touch with media, to do XYZ, she was actually able to pivot into doing a role that was her dream role doing something quite similar. So even though all of her formal work experience was being an accountant, think about what else you have to bring to the table and the other skills coming from other areas of life as well.

This goes for all areas of the job search, but just focus on what you do have. Focus on what you do bring to the table. Because so often we'll have that nagging feeling like, oh, I haven't had that one thing that they asked for. I don't have experience in that specific thing. That's fine. You're not even gonna address that in your resume, your cover letter. But your brand, your marketing materials, your interview preparation, it's all gonna be around what you do bring to the table. At no one point in time is anyone ever complete. We've all got things that we're going to learn next. We've all got ways in which we're going to grow next. You're allowed to have space, right? You're allowed to have space to grow into things.

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I actually encourage you to apply even if you don't have quite a few of the bullet points because I would reframe it as like, oh, great, there's still going to be room for learning, right? I'm not going to get bored. There's going to be stretching here. And that's win-win: I can bring most of it to the table, but there's a nice, healthy amount of stretch.

Shohreh: Oh my gosh, I love everything that you just said in your answer to that question. One of my favorite self-trust affirmations is: no one can do it like me. And helping people to really believe that. And I think that's such an important thing to tell yourself when you are applying for jobs because it does feel like I'm not as good as other people and, like, I'm not bringing enough to the table. Like, that mindset shift that you said at the end about, like, there's going to be room for me to grow, that's so powerful. That's such a good way to think about that when you don't have all of those bullet points. I love that.

Rosie: Mmhmm.

Shohreh: Yes. Alright, so another thing that I got some questions about was coping with a layoff or needing to transition jobs unexpectedly. And I think with the pandemic over the last couple of years this has been the experience for a lot of folks where whatever they thought was gonna happen with their career, like, that is not what went to plan. And what to do in that space where you're like, alright, I don't have a job, or, you know, you're kind of coming to the end of a job and that's clear and you're needing to move onto something else. I think that can be a really low struggle point for people and just kind of figuring out what is the mindset to have there in looking for something new.

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Rosie: Yeah, absolutely. This has been such a common experience, hasn't it, recently, both from that perspective and people just really re-evaluating what they want out of life and realizing, okay, I'm going to have to leave this employer. So there's a lot of movement going on.

I think if you have been laid off or furloughed or you know that your employment is gonna be coming to an end soon, I think the major mindset thing to hold onto is to not make it mean anything about you. 'Cause it triggers that deep stuff in us: I'm not wanted. I'm feeling rejected. I'm being abandoned. I'm losing my community, the people around me. These are powerful and tense, fear-based human emotions.

And so it's really important to keep that confidence high and remember all of the amazing things that you've done and you've achieved. All of the ways in which you show up and you add value to the workplace. All the things you have to give: the hunger and the talent and the passion. All of the things that you have to give to people. Because when you let that knock down your confidence, it's of course going to make a career change or a job search a lot harder as well.

So that would be the main thing. Don't make it mean anything about you. It's a business decision, or it's the parting ways of, you know, a contractual relationship or however you want to reframe it. It does not mean anything about you or your abilities. It could have been anyone in that position, anyone.

I think in that moment of life as well, your brain is gonna start really struggling with the lack of certainty, and it's going to really start

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panicking that that plan it thought it had isn't there anymore. And so giving your brain certainty is really going to help, even though we can never fully have certainty. And so, again, it's a lot of mindfulness practices and a lot of mindset work. But you can tell your brain things like, we can be certain that there's no such thing as the right decision. Whatever we do next, it's one decision. We get to try it out. We get to see how it feels. And if it's not right, we can make another move, right? A career is not a prison sentence; we're allowed to make changes.

So we can be certain that whatever we choose next, there's no such thing as a right decision. We can be certain that we've been given a moment in time to re-evaluate and have time to think, for once, rather than being in the hamster wheel of life and being so busy and just head down and not having time to sit up and just breathe and think, that you just keep going forward in that same direction without even taking two seconds. Like, we can be certain that we have time here to have a think and to do some work and to do a strengths test and to do my values cards and to do all these kinds of things that are going to help me get more information about what I want next.

You can give your brain reassurance and certainty that you're going to learn and grow as a person in this time, right? That no matter what happens, whenever we have a change, especially one that throws us out of the comfort zone or out of sort of that conveyor belt that we were on, yes, it's uncomfortable and it's hard, but that's where growth happens. So we can be certain that we're gonna grow and it's gonna be beneficial in that way.

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There's things I would say that you can focus on like that that are going to reassure your mind. I would say I could go into the technical stuff of job searching and that kind of thing, but that's not going to do anything for you if you're not showing up in the right headspace for yourself. And to do that, you've got to work on that mindset and remind yourself as well—this is a little ritual I give my clients to do, but every single day of my program, they need to jot down seven reasons why they're a badass. So, why are you a badass? Just reminding yourself of all the things you have to give and also reassuring your brain basically that you're gonna be okay.

Shohreh:

Mm. I'm so glad you said that about how, you know, a career or a job is not a prison sentence. Like, you do not have to stick with it. Because I've had several friends in that position where they knew that the job that they had was not working for them anymore, or, you know, they were laid off so they were looking for something new, and they had that doubt of like, oh, is this next thing, like, is it perfect enough, right? Like, is this what I would want to do for ten years? All these different questions. And then realizing, you know what? Like, I can try it and see if it's good enough, if it ticks enough of the boxes. And if I don't like it, there is nothing stopping me from looking for something else, you know, whenever, six months down the road, a year, two years down the road.

I think especially because it's so uncommon now for people to, like, have one job and stick with it for 20, 30, 40 years that it's less of this mark against people when you've had different jobs on your resume.

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But I think that stigma still really sticks with people of like, oh god, what are employers going to think if I've bounced around between these different jobs?

Rosie: Yeah, it's funny, isn't it? I think some industries like tech are really challenging that. Like, because, if you are talent in tech, you're getting headhunted and your resume is a shit show [laughs lightly].

Shohreh: Yes!

Rosie: You are changing, like, every nine to twelve months sometimes, you know? So I think it's changing, but it's true that people are so caught up in that stigma. You're absolutely allowed to change things and try new things and experiment. There's always going to be a red thread in your story, and it's you. So you are allowed to make changes and just keep building your talent stack, your relationship stack. You're allowed to just keep building on yourself. And if you're adaptable and can work across different contexts and cultures and you can do all of these things, it's actually becoming super attractive because we all want employees that are agile—agile and can adapt, can shift gears, because the world is changing really quickly and there are new innovations popping up all the time.

So that's another reframe for you, you know? Like, change can be healthy, it can be good. Not changing out of a place of, I don't know what I want, I keep repeating the same negative patterns, I keep changing jobs just to end up miserable six months later. I'm not talking about that unhealthy kind of change which is running away and not

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solving the root cause, but changing roles every 18 months, two years, if you want to, is totally cool now, and I don't think many people realize that.

Shohreh:

And I also think it's kind of how you—maybe spin isn't the right word, but it's also a bit how you spin it, like in interviews and conversations with potential employers. 'Cause if you are coming at it from a place of strength and being like, this job didn't align with my values and I wanted something that did. Or, I learned these things at this job but I realized I wanted something that was a different fit or where I could use these skills. Like, there's so many ways to talk about the reasons that you've transitioned that are, like, a positive and affirmative way of doing it versus trying to kind of hide that or shy away from discussing it. Like, I just think that there's a very empowered way to do it, and if you have that mindset, like, you're gonna easily be able to sell an employer on why you made those switches if they might have any concerns about it.

Rosie:

Yeah, absolutely. And I think that's a golden nugget to leave people with, which is anything that comes out of a place of self-awareness and emotional intelligence is gonna fly. If it's coming out of a place because you're making moves because it makes sense for you, because it aligns to your career vision, you're clear on what you want, and there's a rationale behind it that completely makes sense because you have that self-awareness and you've done the work, that's attractive, right, to an employer. So you're absolutely spot on. It's not about spinning it, but it's about sharing those real reasons. And if they're genuine reasons

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that make sense, then, like, you've got a human on the other side of the table of you, you know? They're gonna understand. And if they don't, they're not your people anyway. So, yeah.

Shohreh:

Absolutely. Alright, well, I think we have time for one more question. We talked on this a little bit at the beginning when I was explaining why I chose you as the career coach for the podcast, but I did have some folks ask that if they are looking for a career coach, are there certain things that they should look for? Or, maybe even better, are there red flags that they should watch out for?

Rosie:

Oh gosh, I mean, I would need to do a whole podcast episode on red flags, there are so many [laughter]. But I think the first thing to keep in mind is really, what are you trying to get from it? So the career coach profile may be a little bit different if you're trying to get clarity versus if you're just wanting to job hunt, get the job, move quite quickly, sign the offer and go.

So it really depends on what you're after, but if you really want to figure out what you want to do with your life, if you want that clarity side of things, definitely go for someone who has deep expertise in psychology and mindset coaching, maybe they use some modalities, like NLP, but you can tell that they are used to working with the brain. Because in changing your career and changing your identity, you're going to have so much shit come up that's gonna get in your way. And 80% of making a career transition genuinely is the mindset side of things. It's the brain throwing a tantrum saying, you can't do that! You're not skilled enough to do that! They're not going to hire you compared to already qualified

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candidates! Etcetera, etcetera. So that's huge, I would say, in terms of what you're looking for.

And then when it comes to actually landing the job and the job hunt side of things, please, please, please prioritize people who have extensive recruitment experience or HR experience in the industry, either working across multiple different companies and industries or in your dream target industry. And why I say that is there a lot of, like, TikTok career coaches out there who landed one internship at Amazon and now they teach people how to get into tech, right?

Shohreh: Oh boy. Yeah.

Rosie: And they've never, ever hired someone, worked with an ATS. Another kind of one is making TikToks like, did you know if you submit your resume online and it has color in it the ATS is going to reject it because it can't read color. So they're just taking shit they find, like, off blogs, off the internet, and just spinning shit, and they've got a million likes, and that's just not true. So really don't go for audience size, necessarily, but be more discerning than that in terms of who you're choosing and really go for someone who has genuine recruitment experience, who has actually used ATS, who has actually been on the other side of the room talking with candidates, talking with hiring managers, and deciding who gets the job, for several years. That's kind of what I would aim for.

And just in terms of fit, there's always gonna be reasons that we choose a coach because we vibe with them, right? So just be clear on what your

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reasons might be. And it's usually because you can see a little bit of yourself in them. So, for example, quite a few people who want to make international career moves come to me because I come from a background of small-town New Zealand, like, no one in my family ever went to university, kind of grew up on the poverty line, and I completely changed my life through my career. And I moved to Paris and I built this international career and I made that happen. So when people see that, they have that feeling like, I want to make an international move, like, despite not having the networks, not having the Ivy League school on my resume, I want to make that happen for myself, they might come to me.

So be clear about sort of what those things might be like for you. It might be a reflection of who you are, like maybe you want to work with a queer career coach, right? Maybe you want to work with a career coach who specialized in tech, whatever that is. But just be really clear on what that is, but please, please, please, do your research on their actual real-world experience, not just their experience since becoming a career coach.

And then the last thing I would say is testimonials, testimonials, testimonials. So just making sure that their programs and methodologies, you know, work, and they can provide at least, ideally, 20, 30 plus different testimonials, and they're open to you even having a chat with a few of their previous clients. That would be a really good sign as well.

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Shohreh: Ooh, yes, thank you for saying that. I was gonna add that. Y'all, anytime that you're hiring anybody, like a coach, a service provider, you can always ask them—again, assuming that it's ethically possible, so maybe not a therapist—but for those of us where it's ethically possible, you can always ask them, hey, could I get in touch with some of your previous clients 'cause I want to ask them questions. Again, assuming that there's not an ethics issue. If they say no, that alone is a red flag. 'Cause it's like, I would happily let anyone talk with any of my previous clients 'cause I wanna make sure this person is a good fit for me and they're gonna maybe be able to better tell that by talking to people who have already worked with me and asking, what is it really like from their perspective? So I would watch out for anyone who's like, no, you can't do that.

Rosie: Absolutely. Yeah. And, of course it makes sense. And if you have 120% confidence in what you do and what you offer, you won't be defensive. Like, if they get defensive or a bit cagey, like, that's a little bit of a red flag for me. Also, beware on this point as well, just one last thing I wanted to add, like, of someone who says there's one way to achieve your dream. Like, there's just one, best way.

I'm thinking about this dude, I can't remember what he was doing, but he got into Microsoft, long story short, and he did that through having networking conversations. And so his whole line now is, like, never apply online. Don't waste your time. Don't apply online ever. You're only gonna network your way in. Blah, blah, blah.

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And it's like, okay, maybe that worked for you, like, ten years ago for that one company doing that one way as, like, a white male. Like, you know, maybe that worked for you. But, like, preaching that there's only that one way and that that will work for all different kinds of people is just not true. And it's inherently, like, biased. So that's also a red flag to watch for as well, that preaching of one way only.

Shohreh: Absolutely. I see this all the time, too, with, like, you know, for entrepreneurs, business coaches who will be like, I did this one thing that was successful for me and now that's just what I teach to everybody else to do. I'm like, that does not sound like very smart work right there. And a lot of people do this. They get huge followings, they're very successful in it. But anytime you're seeing this one-size-fits-all model, it's usually 'cause that's all that they know, which itself is a problem.

Rosie: Yeah, and that's the thing, right? It's like, as harsh as it is to say, but just because you had one Reel that went viral doesn't mean that you can teach a process that's actually replicable for people. There's also, like, yes you can teach people how to do reels, but you can't promise them that they'll go viral, right? So if their story has that element of just luck or chance in it, is it a repeatable system? You also need to understand that as well.

Shohreh: Yeah. And also the element of privilege, which people so often fail to mention. Oh, this person was supporting me and that's why I was able to start my business. Or my parents gave me this trust fund and that's

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why I have all this money and now I live on a yacht. You know, people just conveniently leave those things out, which is a problem.

Rosie: They do, and there's so much inherent bias. There's also, like, you know, pretty privilege on TikTok. We could go into, there's a whole thing [Shohreh laughs lightly]. But yeah, that's a whole other thing [laughs lightly].

Shohreh: It really is. Well, thank you so much for being here, Rosie. I loved this conversation. I think this is gonna be so, so helpful for folks wherever they are in their career journey, their job-search journey. How can people find you and how can my listeners best support you at this time?

Rosie: Yeah, beautiful. So, I mean, just come along and follow for the ride. I'm mostly on Instagram. I would say that that's my main platform in terms of being in the DMs, having a chat, like, being on there quite a decent chunk of the day, probably a little bit too much. So I'm just @BadassCareers on Instagram. I also do longer, video-length trainings on YouTube, so youtube.com/badasscareers where I've got trainings on career clarity, figuring out what you want, you know, LinkedIn resumes, all of that good stuff. And also you can come and connect with me on LinkedIn as well if you like. So my LinkedIn URL is just linkedin.com/in/rosiecareercoach.

I've got lots of resources available, like lots of freebies and stuff like that. But I think in terms of the most relevant freebie for this conversation, I would definitely suggest my Career Happiness Playbook. It's actually a workbook that you can work through, through the

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Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Rosie McCarthy

different phases of mindset and getting career clarity and personal branding kind of topics. So that's just at badasscareers.com/playbook. And, yeah, it's a nice workbook to work through in your own time and have some reflection time for your career.

Shohreh: Fabulous. I will put links to all of that in the show notes so it's very easy for people to find. And thank you again so much for sharing your time and your expertise with all of us.

Rosie: Thank you so much for having me, Shohreh, I really loved our conversation.

Shohreh: Me too.

[Music plays]

And that's our show for today. If you're enjoying Conjuring Up Courage, don't forget to subscribe through your podcast provider of choice so you never miss an episode. Additionally, if you haven't left a rating and review in the Apple Podcasts app yet, you can do so from any Apple device to help more people find and benefit from the show. I also love hearing from listeners, so feel free to take a screenshot from your podcast player, post on social media, and tag me. My username is @ShohrehDavoodi on all platforms. Finally, you can sign up for my email newsletter, The Sunday Share, and get more details about how to work with me by going to ShohrehDavoodi.com. Thank you so much for listening, and I hope you'll join me for the next episode.

[Music fades]