

# SFF163: Chad Robertson

[00:00:00] **Heidi:** Welcome to another episode of the successful fashion freelancer podcast. I am your host, Heidi. And today we have a little bit of a different episode for you. I am interviewing a successful freelancer, but he is not in fashion. And I have a couple things that I wanna share with. You before we jump into the interview first, if this is your very first episode, uh, of the podcast, this might not be the best episode to start on.

Um, cuz it is a little bit unique. And second to that, I'm gonna explain the uniqueness of it in a second. But second to that, I do wanna give a little bit of a trigger warning. Um, in the very beginning of my conversation with Chad, my guest for today's episode, um, he talks about some hard stuff that he witnessed as.

Uh, as a paralegal and he talks about some stuff that he witnessed that might be sensitive conversation to some people listening. Um, so you might wanna [00:01:00] jump past up until about 10 or 11 minutes into our conversation. Um, he just talks about some stuff that he witnessed as a paralegal. And what made him wanna leave that career and pursue freelancing?

Um, and again, it might be sensitive to some listeners. So heads up on that. And now let me introduce Chad and tell you who he is and what he does. And a little bit about why I brought him on the podcast. So Chad is a freelancer who does book formatting, um, for printed books, as well as eBooks. And I have hired him twice as a freelancer to work on our books and he is just a phenom.

Freelancer. So he pitched to be on the podcast and he said, Hey, Heidi, I we'd really love to be on the podcast. And I would love to share my story of how I went from \$20,000 a year to \$100,000 a year. Now, what does it have to do with. This podcast, it seems like. Okay, great. He has a success story, but it's a little bit outta left field.

Well, [00:02:00] here's the thing. Back in 2017, when I first hired Chad to create our ebook for us, he was charging very, very, very low rates and I kind of kicked him in the butt and I said, Chad, you've got to raise your rates. You. Doing yourself, a disservice. Um, and here is why now he told me that a lot of people over the years had been telling him to raise his rates, but he had not done it.

And finally, because of some reason, something clicked when I talked to him and he raised his rates. It is what allowed him to go from 20,000 to a hundred

thousand dollars a year. And so he talks through some of the mental barriers that he had with raising his rates and where he's at now with all of that.

So if you are struggling, Feeling like I can't charge that much. Nobody would ever pay that much so on and so forth. That sort of stuff. This conversation is gonna be really, really inspiring to you. Um, again, it's not in fashion, but it's totally relevant. And Chad is just such a great freelancer [00:03:00] that, you know, when he pitched and said he wanted to come on the show, I sent a poll out on Instagram to all of our followers on Instagram.

And you guys said yes, even though it's not related to fashion. Still wanted to hear this story. So we brought it on the podcast. Um, again, reminder that if you, you know, maybe just wanna skip back, skip past some sensitive conversation, um, about his work as a paralegal, jump into about maybe 10 or 11 minutes.

And, uh, yeah, that being said, I want to introduce you to Chad. If you are enjoying this episode of a successful fashion freelancer podcast, make sure to hit subscribe wherever you're listening. And if you wanna check out our free resources, you can do that by heading over to [soheidi.com/freelance](https://soheidi.com/freelance), we will link that up below the video and, or excuse me, the audio.

Uh, we don't have a video version of this one. We had a technical difficulty, uh, we'll link that up below the video and, uh, yeah, you can grab all of our free resources. All right. Without further ado, let's jump into my conversation with Chad, [00:04:00] welcome to the successful fashion freelancer podcast. Um, you are a unique guest here in that you are a successful freelancer, but not specific to fashion, but I made an exception and let you come on the show.

I say, let you, because you pitched to me to be on the show and I'm super excited to share your story because I think it's still really, really relevant. Um, so tell us a little bit about who you are and what you do in, in what industry

[00:04:31] **Chad:** I'll say. I am re really grateful that you actually listened to my craft kinda allowed me to come on. Um, most people I know, but you have been integral to my success. Um, so I'm, I'm very, very grateful that you gave me this opportunity to come and talk to you today. Um, as far as my industry goes, uh, what I do is I help entrepreneurs [00:05:00] produce and publish best selling in a nutshell.

[00:05:07] **Heidi:** Okay. And that is how I found you. So I'll just tell quick backstory, if that's okay. um, back in 2017, I found you on Upwork because I was very specifically looking for someone who was an expert at publishing

Kindle eBooks. Kindle is the, is the number one platform, right? So I found you and I was like, this is my guy.

I. and I just, I gotta do a quick plug here. I'm being so niche because being niche is something I talk about a lot as a freelancer and you are so niche in what you do. And I specifically, I can like vividly remember going onto Upwork and doing that search. And there was a lot of people that were like, yeah, I do a gajillion things.

And also, yeah, this, [00:06:00] and you were like, I think your title, your, your headline, whatever they call it on Upwork was like Kindle. EUB formatting specialist or something. I mean, it was like exactly what I needed. I go, that's my guy. I think you're the only person I talked to about the project. And I went ahead and hired you.

And that was the start of our relationship, our, our business relationship.

[00:06:20] **Chad:** Yes. Yet, you know, I wasn't privy to your perspective, but, um, all of that rings through my, I try to keep my headline simple. Um, , uh, I, I'm not knowing what to do, just like everybody else. Like you don't know. I know what to call myself.

You know, I like to tell people nowadays that I'm very, very lucky, the only skills I have or reading. And how do you, you know, how do you turn that into a career I can read and I can write, I don't have any other skills, but one of the things I [00:07:00] learned was, um, try to keep it simple. You know, mm-hmm, excelling to the world.

This is what I'm pushing to the world. Mm-hmm and a lot of clients have found me just, I'm not Johnny, you know, I I'm at the Jack of all trades. There are three or four things that I do when I do them really, really well. Mm-hmm

[00:07:21] **Heidi:** you do? I can attest to that cuz you, I was your client. I hired you back in 2017 and I hired you again when we did our, the second book, um, our second freelancing book.

So I wanna talk a little bit about kind of big picture. Like you sent me an email and you said. Essentially, Hey Heidi, I'd like to come on the podcast. What you don't realize is you and, and what you taught me way back was an integral part in me, going from a freelancer earning \$20,000 a year to a freelancer earning a hundred thousand dollars a year.

That's a massive jump. [00:08:00] And so I'd love to talk a little bit about, you know, where you were at as a freelancer when we worked together first in 2017 and where you are at now in 2022, and what has happened over the last five years to get you. To where you are now, like what changes did you make? You know, what are some of the lessons you learned?

I know that's like a really big loaded, uh, question and that's, I think that's essentially what we'll kind of talk about throughout this conversation. Um, but tell us a little bit about, you know, where you started with your freelancing and then, and then get us start leaning us on the journey.

[00:08:37] **Chad:** okay. So I, I wanna be candid, right? Um, this is my. This is the way I, I navigate through life. I, I don't really remember a whole bunch of things. so I'd rather just tell people the truth. Um so that way I don't have to remember whatever lie I made up, you know? Um, so when I started this, [00:09:00] um, I was an immigration paralegal and I literally had, I, I owned two shorts.

I owned a pair of shoes and a pair of sandals. um, and I decided that I was going to be rich. Um, and I know that sounds, that sounds so crazy now, but I, I had experience being poor. This was life that I had lost everything by everything. I mean, I needed to go back down to the registrar's office three separate occasions and ask them for my birth certs to get lost.

Everything. Um, and I looked on the internet and I said to myself, like, I see people making. Money on the internet. I wonder if I could do that. Um, and I was very Lu book snowball. Um, a lot of people, I think don't underscore and you want to have [00:10:00] something you don't know how to get it. Like you have no idea how to be successful.

It's not like you have a whole bunch of. People in immediate vicinity who have done this difficult thing, and now can impart here's this wisdom that I learned along the journey. Like you don't know anybody. Um, so I went online and at the time, like I said, I was an immigration power, but I had to give that up because I'm not as tough as I would like to be like, literally tried to commit suicide.

He hung himself in his. The guards had to cut him down and I am. Prepared for like, that's just too much for me. Mm-hmm you understand what I mean? Mm-hmm you can't do that, you know, and I don't like to lose, so, so, you know, as you can imagine, you can't win every single case. So there are a number of times where I've had to call somebody's wife and explain, look, we tried

[00:11:00] everything we, but your husband is never gonna come home to you again, the only way you.

We're gonna see him as if you punch that he himself hasn't seen in 20 years, like this guy I'm talking about, he lived in the United States since he was a child. He had two kids. Um, one was autistic, 10 years old. He had a daughter, I believe she was 14. And, um, she was so smart that she had gotten herself a scholarship to a prestigious, um, New York high school, one of those private schools and the government was still like, no, man, like this thing that, you know, so I, I, I just couldn't do this anymore.

Plus you're working 80 hours so weak. Yeah. You know, my wife wanted to go back to college. My daughter wanted stuff. Like, I just, I couldn't do it anymore. So I tried relapsing and back then it wasn't Upwork back then there was Esk and even later on yeah. And made up [00:12:00] work, you know, I didn't know what was doing, had no clue.

and you were one of the people who said to me, I don't know if you remember, I had a horrible headshot and you said, man, like, if you actually do this, you have to take this thing seriously, like get a professional headshot. What are you, what are you doing? I think I take like a selfie in my car or something.

[00:12:22] **Heidi:** It was, I remember it was super,

[00:12:24] **Chad:** no, like, this is not how you, you know, like I selected you because.

Yeah at all. I think I had my head tiled to this, a car selfie, literally. Yeah. And, um, but at the time I didn't believe, I literally didn't believe that there was anything. In freelancing. I was looking at freelancing as a way to get like a little bit of capital and then, you know, try some of the other things that you find on the internet.

Yeah. And I'm gonna [00:13:00] invest in this or I'm gonna, you know, Bitcoin all the rage now. Um, so that's what I was thinking. I wasn't thinking to myself, like this is the thing that's going to make me successful.

[00:13:14] **Heidi:** okay. So you, you created this upward or Elans OES, whatever it was back in the day, this profile. Um, I mean, I still reached out to you cuz cuz I, I, I do, I had actually forgotten about the photo you mentioned, but I, I remember it now. Um, but I re I literally forgot about it. Yeah. I remember was the undercharging thing, which I wanna talk about.

Um, but. Yes. I, I reached out to you, I think at that point you had some reviews, but it was basically because your profile and your description of who you were and what you did was exactly what I was looking for. Um, and nobody El, everybody else was the Jack of all trades. Right. And I was like, I don't want the person that does a gajillion things [00:14:00] and also happens to do this ebook publishing.

I go, I want the ePublishing person. And that was you. So I, I reached out to you despite that. And I could tell right away, I remember we had a conversation I could tell right away. I was like, this guy's great. Like he's reliable. He knows his stuff. He's gonna be great. So I, I forget the exact process. Order of operations to perhaps we go through the project and then I think middle towards the end, I started giving you a lot of constructive critique on how you were presenting yourself as a freelancer.

And I, the headshot I forgot about, but that was definitely one. I was like, Chad, you gotta put something up there that looks a little little better than this.

[00:14:43] **Chad:** Yeah. And, um, I am, there are some other people whose names I'm, I'm gonna mention, um, You literally said to me, like, I will pay you more money to do the same thing you're doing now. Yeah. You, you said, you know, your words [00:15:00] were, raise your rates and, um, You were not the first person to have told me that, not for her mm-hmm number of lawyers told me that people who T you know, um, college professors, but for some reason, when you and I spoke, I remember we had like this long conversation.

I, at that time I was worried that I was taking up too much of your time. Mm-hmm cuz in my mind, you know, like I am like, I always tell people, like I am nobody. um, and I'm looking at you, you're this extremely successful person and I'm like, I'm worried. No, no, I'm bothering Heidi. I don't wanna it's the beginning.

Freelancer can, um, empathize with this um, and, um, but I argued with, I argued with you the whole time, which was here. I am asking you for advice and.

Telling me what to do. And I'm like, nah, that's not gonna work. There's [00:16:00] no way this will work. And, um, it struck me like, you know, I have a little sister Danielle, and it was almost like you were saying, um, like, how could you be so stupid? Like, that's not what you were saying. Mm-hmm, but it's like how this thing works and whatever your issue is, um, You know, being compliant and you had tried and you were frustrated.

And, um, I thought about that thing. Like, I still think about it now, like that, oh, it's still in my brain to this day. Um, because without it, like I said, other people had told me you're not charging enough. Your rates are too low. , but it was just the way you'd done over this 45 minutes of stupid argumentation that I was giving you the, yeah,

[00:16:55] **Heidi:** I remember the phone call very vividly. I was actually visiting my parents in San Diego and I [00:17:00] remember, I think my mom and I were out getting our nails done and I got my, I was done and I was like, I'm gonna go take this phone call. And I stepped outside the salon and I was like, standing on the sidewalk, chatting with you.

I literally vividly remember this. Do you remember any of the things that we could cause I, I really wanna dig into this a lot because, um, undercharging is a, a big offense. Uh, it's probably the number one offense that most freelancers fall victim to. Um, and so do you remember like any of the things that I specifically said that resonated with you that, that.

pushed you that, like you reached that tipping point where you actually did wind up raising your rates. Whereas a ton of people had told you this before and you hadn't done it. Do you remember the difference?

[00:17:47] **Chad:** Yes. So like I said, it was that. Uh, at the end of the call, you know, it's like, because you were very respectful.

You, you were very, not every, you know, [00:18:00] if you're a freelancer, you know, this, like not every client is nice, not respectful, but he heard I was in Jamaica and he said, I want you to sing the national Anthem for me. Right. Like he literally in this. Imperious way, you know, like I'm paying you that for me. So I have to fine.

I hung up on him, but that's not what we're talking about. Um, not all clients, the way that you, the fact that you were so respectful, mm-hmm yes. Not all clients. Um, you were re you were super respectful and you were a person that I looked up to. So the fact that you were giving me that respect and that we were having, like this argument, this battler, I remember you, you mentioned, um, I don't know how to pronounce his name properly.

You recommended his book to me. Um, I will make you

[00:18:51] **Heidi:** rich remain. Say to you, I will teach you be rich and I'll

[00:18:53] **Chad:** back and call. Yeah. Yes. Um, [00:19:00] and reading the book after you had explained the things that you had said to me, um, another lady said to me, um, it's not your fault that they can afford you. Mm. And that's something I wish like every freelancer, like you will hear this and, and understand before.

The other person's ability to pay. Like another part is we do work for free and I'm very, very glad you say that in your book. I, I read this book freelancing in fashion. Mm-hmm um, don't ever do that. Mm-hmm never like you should never, ever, ever do this. Don't work for people for free lit. We, we all do it though.

But like, you're starting, you don't know what you're doing. All of us do it. So it's like the, it was this combination, man. Like we had this argument and you were respectful throughout. You don't understand, like, he seems like a, a straightforward [00:20:00] guy. He's reason, television. Like he just refuses to do the one thing that will.

Aid in your company's success. Mm-hmm raise your rates. You left raise your rates.

[00:20:14] **Heidi:** Yeah. Um, I'll throw out one thing, because this is really an interesting perspective from the client side that I think a lot of freelancers don't always see, this is actually something I learned from REIT Sati. Um, he summarizes it very succinctly.

with the statement essentially goes people value what they pay for basically meaning I'll, I'll give it in a fashion analogy. Cause I think that's a little easier. If you buy a cheap dress from forever 21 for \$15, you don't take care of it the same way that you would. If you bought an expensive dress from, I don't know.

Like Chanel. I don't even know how much a Chanel dress costs [00:21:00] way more than I would wanna spend. But even if you bought like a two, let's say a \$200 dress, you treat that \$200 dress very differently. Then you treat a \$15 dress. Right? So first of all, you will track the people that will treat you with respect, you'll track the right type of qu clients.

But beyond that there's perception. Psychological perception when it comes to pricing. And when people see a freelancer that's too cheap, either you, one, you attract the cheap clients, which are gonna be the shitty clients or two people look at you and they think, mm, I don't know if they're really that good, cuz they're, they're too cheap.

And I remember with your profile, I looked at you and I forget what your hourly rate was. I forget, we talked and you wound up telling me like how much it was gonna cost to do the whole book. And I was like, God, that seems really cheap. Like, is he really gonna do that? Good of a job. It's too low. Right. And I'll tell you what I literally right [00:22:00] now, before we got on the call and, and a little bit yesterday.

I'm doing some research on, um, doing some paid ads for the first time ever in our business. We've grown organically the whole time. And we're finally looking into doing paid ads and I wanna hire someone to help because it's really hard. And I've been, I've been on Upwork and I've been looking for people to hire and there's people that are like \$200 an hour.

And there's people that are \$20 an hour. And I am leaning towards the people that are a hundred plus an hour, even if they don't have any reviews. I was like, I want a specialist and I want someone who is good enough that they are valuing their services. That they're charging me this much. Like if you're \$20 an hour, even like 30, I'm like, I'm not even paying attention to you because it's too cheap.

I just don't even think it could be good enough for me not to be like all Hoy toy, like, oh, I'm so good. I need the good enough thing. But I'm like, if you're that inexpensive, do you really know what you're doing? And I had those same reservations with you. and from a client's perspective, I don't think a lot of [00:23:00] freelancers think about that.

[00:23:05] **Chad:** No. Um, and I can remember my mindset back then was the mayor of.

That's who did this book for me. And she did a similar thing that you did for me. She, and she, she even like, you can go and, and read this review that she left on LinkedIn, which is essentially exactly what she just said. Yeah. And she said, I looked at four different people. Um, I like Chad's skillset a lot.

I thought he was the guy, but he was too cheap. Mm-hmm so I went to more that Chad was charging. Like she literally wrote this on my profile. Yeah. Um, I went to the guy, he was three times. He cost three times as much. Um, but I, he didn't do what I wanted him to do. So I went to a guy who was twice. He cost twice as much.

Um, And that guy didn't do what I needed him to do either. And then I went to Chad, like I [00:24:00] just gave up and I went to him and like, he exceeded my

expectations. Um, so if, if those two other guys hadn't failed, let's say I would never have met Susie mm-hmm . And the only thing that was keeping me from, you know, putting food on my table was this weird idea that I had.

And I even remember why I did it. Like I thought. I was gonna come into this, this little industry, this little niche, and I would undercut everybody. Else's price, not understanding that when people look at that, what they're thinking is this guy doesn't have enough value. Mm-hmm not that, oh, look, I'm getting a super deal.

Mm-hmm . , you know what I mean? Mm-hmm, like, I I'm just looking at it strictly from the freelancer per perspective. Like I want more clients, I wanna make myself attractive to clients. So one way to do that is to, you know, be cheapest, not understanding like, no, like people who are successful, don't look at it [00:25:00] that way.

Like I don't, and even in my life now, like I. I don't do that. I don't want the cheapest doctor when I'm going to the doctor. I want the guy who, you know, he has a nice office. He drives a nice car to me that it looks like this guy knows what he's doing. Mm-hmm, , I'm gonna do all the research as well. Mm-hmm but you know, like, I don't want, want the guy, I walk into his office and they're like chickens fighting in the, the front corridor, which.

But Hey, he's, you know what I mean? But Hey is cheap. Yeah. Like, no, like you, you don't, nobody wants that guy and

[00:25:27] **Heidi:** you being realistic. Well, some people do and the people that want the cheapest guy is not the person you want for your client.

[00:25:34] **Chad:** that's another very, very good point. So almost immediately overnight.

And you have to remember too, like we're talking about this, like this happened in a vacuum. It didn't like, I, I know a lot of freelancers mm-hmm and so I went to them after I spoke to you, like I spoke to this lady, she seems to know what she's doing. She said, raise your rates. And everybody's like, no, are you crazy?

Like, if you raise your rates, you'll never get work. Nobody will hire. .

[00:26:00] Yeah. Yeah, yeah. And, um, I remember I said to one guy, look, I'm just gonna try it. Like, I think at the time, um, my rates were like \$25 an hour Uhhuh. And I said, I'm just gonna try it. I'm gonna double it to 50. Yeah. Like all these different people have told me that, you know, like this is a problem.

And everybody's like, no, don't, you know, so I say, I'm just gonna try it. I'll I'll give it a month. If it doesn't work, I'll go back to, to \$25 an hour. Okay. And almost immediately, Heidi, like some of the other things that I complained to you about like the horrible clients, they just disappeared. Yes. They just disappeared because like the people who are coming to you now, they value your services.

They value themselves, they know what they want and, and somebody somewhere, you know, made sure they understood. Like there's no, there's no benefit in being an asshole to people. Yeah. You know, like, so Al I'm talking about like almost immediately, my life changed. And so my, my [00:27:00] hourly rate now is a hundred dollars an hour.

Okay. And most of the time, I'm not interested. Like I'm not patting myself on the back or like, I don't have a big ego, but most of the time, like I don't have a lot of time. And that's the thing that I value most over, almost everything else now. Um, I'm not interested in speaking to most clients unless they're booking me for at least three hours.

Uhhuh . So that's, you know, right off the bat, like you're giving me \$300, whereas before I would have spoken to you for two hours, we would've worked out what you need and the most efficient way of getting there. And then I would've produced the paperback book and the ebook and the cover that you need for \$50 to piece.

So that would've given me \$150,

[00:27:46] **Heidi:** two hours of talking and then two hours per book format.

[00:27:52] **Chad:** yeah. More or less, more

[00:27:53] **Heidi:** or less. Okay. Yeah. Uh, I mean, that's an insane, like what that person is getting for [00:28:00] \$150 is insane. Yes. And, and I can speak, I can attest that, like your quality and your attention to detail and your pride and your work to make sure it's done correctly is very, very, very high.

So. But what happens is when they see that \$25 an hour, a lot of people are like, uh, I'm just gonna get junk work because that's just too cheap. Exactly. Yeah, exactly. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. So overnight, man. Okay. So you, you doubled it, you finally were like, I'm just gonna test this and you doubled it and it sounds like it was an instant success on many levels.

Yes. Okay. Yes. And the only thing that was preventing you previously from doing that was really like stuff in your head. Oh, people don't wanna pay, blah, blah, blah.

[00:28:47] **Chad:** You have another great line in your book where you say like, if you're gonna be successful, you, you gotta get your mental shit straight. I think that's what it says.

Something like that. Yeah. Yeah. And it's a hundred percent true. Like, like I said, like I [00:29:00] come from nowhere, like I'm, you know, I'm not that person anymore, but that's where I come from. And like I said, most people, like when you're. When you're starting from scratch, you don't have a lot of people around who have been successful and can tell you the truth.

Yeah, I know. I know. Um, the other day Kim Kardashian got in

[00:29:19] **Heidi:** trouble. Oh, I don't know. I don't pay attention to her. I,

[00:29:24] **Chad:** I, I don't pay attention to much of this stuff. So once, once this stuff comes onto my radar, you know, like everybody has heard about it, but here here's why I'm glad she got in trouble. Right.

Um, for a long time, um, She per, she perpetrated this idea that the reason that she's successful is not because she works hard, not because she charges what she thinks she's worth, but because she lives a life of leisure. And I have a lot of time now because you and other people have helped me. So I get to observe this in society.

I know a young lady, her name's SAMO, [00:30:00] and she thought that she was going to be a model. By following, you know, the path that Kim Kardashian has articulated. So the other day she said something St. On social media and everybody jumped on her, um, including people who have worked with her so that everybody else can see, like it's not.

You know, it's not like I, I take a 3:00 AM bathroom selfie. There. There's a team of people who make me look like this. Mm. Like I I've been in board meetings from nine o'clock this morning until three o'clock this afternoon. And I'm sure that's pretty similar to your life. Like you always have client calls, always have client meetings, but most people don't put that on Instagram.

And again, when you're starting from nothing. You think, because what you see is, oh, look at this glamor shot. You think this is how I'll become successful. I'll

take these glamor shots and I'll put them up and I'll take myself to all these exotic places I hope. Um, and this is what'll make me successful.

And it, you know, this is not [00:31:00] how life works. Yeah. You literally have to, to work hard, like I'm sure I'm preaching to the choir here. , you know,

[00:31:10] **Heidi:** It does take a lot of hard work. I know you've put it in cuz I've seen it firsthand. Um, so, okay. So I wanna hear a little bit more about some of the, the details of your journey from, you know, going back to what you'd put in the email 20,000 a year to a hundred thousand a year.

Um, and I also wanna point out you live in Jamaica.

[00:31:32] **Chad:** yes. So a hundred thousand dollars

[00:31:34] **Heidi:** a year is insane amount

of

[00:31:35] **Chad:** money. Yeah. Um, I don't like to talk about myself a lot and I'm not gonna pat myself on the back too much, but I do live in on the top floor, off the largest building in my neighborhood. Yeah.

And I. Almost a hundred percent certain that I drive the second most expensive car, the only other person who can afford a car [00:32:00] as expensive as the one I drive is a doctor who lives up the road for me. Okay. Um, um, and that that's like,

it's something, it's a very, very interesting thing. Yeah. That is interesting. A very, very

[00:32:15] **Heidi:** interesting thing. Yeah. Yeah. Um, go.

[00:32:20] **Chad:** No, what I was gonna say, you asked like the, the journey to get there. Yeah. So we already went over the things that you said that helped, and there were other things, but, but another thing that, um, I learned along the way was that I had been giving away a lot of stuff for free.

Mm. Because I didn't value it to me. It's easy, but it's not necessarily easy for my client. And I'm sure other freelancers do this exact same thing. I'll, I'll give you an example. So. There is a little, I know algorithm that we run sometimes.

Um, you come to me, you have a title and you would say, you know, I, I, I would like my book to be called [00:33:00] this, but we can run it through.

Um, Watson has this AI, IBM owns Watson. They have this AI and it will spit out how people perceive your title. Right. Mm. And I would run this thing sometimes. It'll take. Two or three hours, I would run this thing for free and just give it to my clients. I would also set up their book online for free. Like I did the, you know, I've created the files that Amazon needs and I would sit there for hours, um, and upload their file and ensure that all the keywords are correct.

And I would do all of this for free. Like I charged you \$150. So, um, After we had this conversation. And after I started looking into other ways to make myself, you know, to make the process more efficient, um, I realized that there was a lot of stuff that I was giving away that I shouldn't be giving away.

It's it's one thing to, you know, you always wanna delight your clients. I try to [00:34:00] go above and beyond for every client. Mm-hmm . You also need to get out of this weird freelancer habit that we all seem to have where you work for free. Yeah. Like we all pretend not to work for free , but as long as you're devoted to your clients, you will, and it is probably in your best interest to charge for, for

[00:34:21] **Heidi:** some of it.

So how did you shift and start actually charging for all that work you were doing?

[00:34:30] **Chad:** Um, direct result of what you told me. Um, Elaine Wells harm is another person who explained this to me. Um,

[00:34:38] **Heidi:** but like, what did you actually do? So like one day you're doing this for free for your clients charging \$150. And then the next day, you know, the next week you, you raised your rates to 50 an hour, did you all of a sudden just say, okay, well I can do this, but the uploading to Amazon takes three hours.

So that's gonna be another 150. Like what did that actually look like?

[00:34:57] **Chad:** No. So what I, you know, after a while you work [00:35:00] with so many different clients and after a while you realize that a lot of clients want a specific thing. Right. So I started creating packages. So a lot of clients come to me and they want an ebook.

Um, but they don't want the print book and they don't have a cover mm-hmm so that's one package I can create. Here's a package where here's the service I provide. I'm gonna give you an ebook cover and I'm gonna give you an ebook and it costs this. Okay. And I also use some software. Um, there are two pieces of software that I use.

One is called toggle and the other one is called rescue time. Okay. I've heard of toggle five pieces of software. Yeah. Yeah. So I would literally sit down and time myself. How long does this thing take me.

And so when I created the packages, I just incorporated all of that. One of the things. Ramit SA [00:36:00] I still dunno how to pronounce it. Sati. Yeah. Yes. One of the things he says is something like, if you are looking, if you're aiming to make a hundred thousand dollars per year, there's this little heuristic that he uses.

So if you charge a hundred dollars an hour, It can work out that you'll make a hundred thousand dollars for the year. If you wanna make \$60,000 for the year, you charge \$60 an hour. Yeah. So I used that and factored how much time I was spending Uhhuh to create the packages.

[00:36:26] **Heidi:** Okay. Gotcha. Gotcha. Um, so you, it's interesting because I had an interview earlier this morning.

Um, with a, a successful freelancer, uh, actually successful fashion freelancer, but same kind of thing. She said to me, she said, I am. um, she said, I peop my clients have now started hiring me for consulting. She was, she's doing design and pattern making, which is like a physical task. Like, I'm gonna do this thing.

I'm gonna deliver you this physical thing, whether [00:37:00] it's a digital file or, you know, whatever, but there was a deliverable. And she said, so my clients started asking for consulting. And so she goes, I'm getting on phone calls with people and I'm getting paid to think she said, which is wild. To me. She cannot wrap her head around that.

She goes, it feels so second nature. And it's stuff that I take for granted and is so common sense to me. But for them it's really, really valuable. And she goes, I I'm getting paid and people are paying me to do it, but it still feels crazy. It sounds kind like what you were saying, like you were like, oh, but this is just part of the process.

Like I know this stuff inside and out. It's so easily, like how do I charge for this? But guess. You're telling me about this Watson title thing. I've never heard of that. I don't know about this tool. I, and I'll tell you, as, as someone who has uploaded their own book to Amazon, it is a pain in the ass. Like it.

Yeah. It's, it's hard and understanding the interface is like a little bit nuanced. so having someone like [00:38:00] you to, to just do it for me, you've done it thousands of times. Probably it feels really easy, so it can feel hard to charge, but you have to remember that like your client hasn't done it thousands of times.

And so for them, it there's a lot of value in you doing it, even if it's easy for you.

[00:38:18] **Chad:** So at the beginning, I, I, I promised I was gonna be candid. It feels like stealing. Mm that's. How it feels like it feels like theft. Wow. Because it is second nature to me. So it's, it's very difficult for you to go. You know, like, here's this thing that I know how to do.

So it's almost like, you know, you know, rush, exaggerate and say, yeah, it's right. Like it's a, a habit now. Like I learned, you know, skill, like, so to charge somebody for it, like, I don't see the other person who's struggling for four hours trying to get their thing uploaded to Amazon and getting it rejected two or three times.

Mm-hmm you. I only hear about that later on, like [00:39:00] over, you know, over the last 10 years, I've had clients who have come to me and explained, this is my perspective on the process. Mm-hmm so it used to feel like, like I was literally stealing from them. Wow. It's like, yeah. So, um, wild. Yeah. Yeah. That that's, that's the reality that, that's how it feels like you, you feel that.

no, um, I, like I said, what I value most is my time. Mm-hmm I started this because I didn't want my mom to need to go to the doctor and be unable to mm. And I watched that, like, I saw that a couple times. I didn't like that. That doesn't feel good for anybody. Right. Mm-hmm so now it's like, all right. Uh, another thing too, that we never talk about is when you're starting, you don't have a lot of clients mm-hmm so each one is precious to you.

Mm-hmm and I, and I, I don't mean to say that my clients are not precious to me now. I, I am very, very grateful [00:40:00] for the life that they allow me to live. I'm very, very grateful for that, but my time is also precious to me. So I usually have four or five clients who are jockeying for, um, a sch a scheduled spot.

Like that's another thing that I do. I, I schedule out my whole day mm-hmm so I only take. I only take client calls, you know, at a specific time in the morning. Mm-hmm because I am, I'm actually doing the work. I'm not subcontracting it. Um, although I should say, I should mention here my partner, um, if its Avi, I apologize if it's, I know I have butcher your name.

Um, but, uh, he, he has this really cool accent. He's from Croatia without him, a lot of the. At writing nights would never get done. Like he's the person who designs or covers. Mm he's a much, much, much better designer than me. Um, and I don't like to continue talking as if like all of this success is solely because I did something [00:41:00] like a lot of it is dependent on processes and, um, A design eye that he brought to the picture.

Um, he he's actually one of the people I was talking about before, when, um, you told me to raise my rates and I, I went to this group of freelancers. He's one of these people. Who's like, no, you can't do that, man. Like your livelihood depends on this. Oh, really? Your business. Like you can't raise your rates like that.

Yeah. When I met him, so I'm not just talking from my own perspective. Like I talked to a lot of people when I met Avis he was charging. And I don't wanna get this wrong Iza. Don't hold it against me. I believe he was charging \$50 per cover. And I don't say this lightly, I believe IA is the greatest book designer on the planet.

The best right. I've worked with. You know, umpteen designers, like I know almost all the designers in my space. Yeah. Mark dos. I'm sure he'll have a difference of opinion. But if ITSA has worked on at this point, maybe 2000 different [00:42:00] books, wow. Everything from, you know, celebrities to household names, um, and he's done it in, in multiple different languages and he has just this eye for design man.

That's. Second to none unparalleled then. And when I met this guy, he's charging \$50

[00:42:19] **Heidi:** per. He's not the guy to be taking pricing advice from ,

[00:42:23] **Chad:** I'm just using that to illustrate that we all go through this. He doesn't charge \$50 per cover now. Yeah. But at the beginning, like even when I said, so, you know, you, you gave it to me and I tried to pass it on to other people, even when I pass it on to him.

And like, I remember I could probably pull up a screenshot of this message I sent him. And like, you have to, you need to raise your rates. Yeah. I remember this, um, So, you know, all, all, all that to say. Um, I think almost all beginning freelancers do suffer from [00:43:00] this idea that the things that are second nature to you, um, you give them away for free mm-hmm.

when I don't think that that's the best way and I no longer feel like I'm stealing good. The other day he told me he booked a \$900 cover. Yeah. He no longer feels like he's stealing either. Good.

[00:43:18] **Heidi:** Yeah. Good. How far you have both of you have. it's tremendous. Yeah, it's tremendous. Yeah. Yeah. Um, Chad, I mean, you're doing amazing things and you know, we, you and I were talking a, a couple minutes before we hit record about, you know, I was saying you, you said, I'm, I'm the happiest man alive.

And I feel so grateful to get to do what I do, and I get to read and write and get paid for it. And. I said, yeah, but you deserve it. And we had a little argument over the fact that yes, you didn't feel you deserved it, but I wanna just say that, you know, have put in the effort to put yourself out there, to get through all the battles and the [00:44:00] failures and the learning curves, and to take the risk to double your price overnight, not knowing what would happen and maybe, you know, sacrificing your livelihood.

I don't know where you were at financially back then, but like, I know for some people, you know, if they don't get a client that month, that can mean getting groceries or not getting groceries. And that can be a really hard, absolutely place to be. Um, and so, you know, I, I wanna be very mindful that you know, you and I have worked closely together on two projects now, and I would hire you again in a heartbeat.

Um, when we do our next book, I will for sure. And anyone out there listening. If you have a book, Chad is your man. Um, I have a very, very, very high standard when it comes to freelancers too. Very PI.

[00:44:44] **Chad:** You, you said that on my review on LinkedIn too. Did I? Like I have a very, yeah, like I I'm I'm I'm not, you said something like, I'm not easy to please.

I have high standards, but I have very

[00:44:54] **Heidi:** high standards. I mean, I think I'm a great client. Like I'm nice to work with and I'm really organized and I have all my stuff [00:45:00] together, but I really have high standards. And, um, you know, you put a lot of effort into your work to do an exceptional job and you, um, You've grown so much over the years.

And, and so I, I think that you do deserve a lot of the success that you've had, despite how you feel. I've seen the effort you've put forth and it's deserved.

[00:45:21] **Chad:** I, I appreciate you saying that. Yeah. But I will still agree to disagree. um, a lot of this, like I'm being serious. If Elaine had not said to me, this is how it works.

This is why I brought up the Kim Kardashian thing. Like when you're. Poor when you're broke and you don't know what you're doing. Like there's all this stuff on the internet. They're telling you do this, do that. Do mm-hmm like you wouldn't even, I'm sure you would believe how much bad advice. Oh, like I, I read and I tried.

I'm sure maybe you are not sure, but perhaps you had a similar journey, like, especially when you start getting to productivity stuff. Yeah. There are all these people who are telling you do this, do that. [00:46:00] You know, you follow all these little and so many of them are. Bullshit. They're just snake oil. Totally.

You know? You know, like, so I see a lot of people who are trying different things. So I don't know that I deserve it. Like there are so many people I see who are working really, really hard, much harder than I work. Um, but they're not getting the success because they've never met somebody like you, they didn't have your step by step guide to show.

This is how you. You know, raise your rates. Um, you have to be competent. You have to be nice to clients. Susie NANS pulled me to the side and she complained about email. So my thing is. if you asked me to do something that I know is wrong, what I used to do is I would just not respond. I'm busy. I have stuff to do.

Mm-hmm and rather than fight with you about the thing that I know is wrong, but you don't know is wrong. Like I'll just ignore that. And she was like, no, like you can't, you can't do that. Like I'm a person [00:47:00] too. And I appreciate that. I don't know as much as you, that's why I came to you about this. Mm-hmm so I want to hear from you why I'm wrong.

Yeah. She actually like, imagine how many more clients would I have gone through doing the wrong thing. If she hadn't pulled me to the side and said, Hey man, like somebody writes you an email. It may seem difficult. Respond to them line by line. Like even if you have to have that argument, you can still be mm-hmm

kind and compassionate and you know, all these other things, but you do need to have difficult conversations sometimes and you shouldn't, you shouldn't avoid them. Yeah. You know? So when you, when you say deserve, like every time you say that, I think to myself, somebody gave me that. Yeah. Like that's

[00:47:44] **Heidi:** not something that I.

But I will say that you have put yourself out there in a way to be receptive to that and to receive that knowledge and to go through the various clients that were paying you too little, um, maybe to no fault of their own, because you were charging too [00:48:00] little and then multiple people telling you to charge more, to charge more, to charge more, and then finally you listening and taking action to make the change.

So I think, you know, you can see people out there working hard and perhaps they have not been as serendipitous in their relationships. In that they haven't met the right people or come across the right thing. But I also will argue that there's a lot of people out there that just their blinders are up so high and so strong that it's everything that they hear is gonna fall on deaf ears and that they will.

They will either not hear it or they will never take action on it. Um, and so of course there's serendipity or luck or however you want being in the right place at the right time. Of course that's a factor in everything in life. But I also see, you know, having worked with and seeing we have almost 500 students inside of our freelance accelerator program, and then we've got.

Thousands and thousands in our communities. Um, there's a difference between the [00:49:00] people that, that see massive success and the people that really struggle. And I'm not saying that, you know, again, timing or whatever might not play into that, but what I have seen over and over and over and over again, Um, it's people getting in their own way, either not listening to the advice or not taking action on it.

Um, or they've just got some limiting belief and mental block that is like not gonna let them get there despite having the tools and the resources that, that they, they do ultimately need. That's what I'm gonna say.

[00:49:35] **Chad:** Yes. Thus, that's the Ugh,

after a 45 minute argument with you and you just said, Ugh, like I can't even, I can't even man with this guy. Yeah. Um, like I, I, I completely embodied that whole. that, that whole mental block, the, the, yeah, the way that my, my mindset was oriented at that time, [00:50:00] wasn't sufficient to lead me to success. And yeah.

You know, I told Elaine once, I don't know if I'll ever win an award, but if I do, like, you're one of the first names that I called. Yeah. Because. You know? Yeah. So again, we'll agree to disagree. Okay. I don't know deserve, okay. I don't

[00:50:17] **Heidi:** know deserve, you've still put in a lot of hard work to get to where you are and you've opened up your mental space to be receptive, to trying things that scare you and make you uncomfortable and then learning and growing from that.

Um, so, you know, you have attributed to, to where you are. Of course other people have to, right. None of us can do this. This whole thing called life a hundred percent, right?

[00:50:40] **Chad:** a hundred percent. A

[00:50:41] **Heidi:** hundred percent. Yeah. Um, Chad, it's been so nice to chat with you on a, uh, you know, outside of our conversations around, you know, book publishing and whatnot.

Um, and to hear a little bit more about your journey and I'm so excited about the growth you've had over the last five years since we first met and [00:51:00] where you are now. Um, I typically end the conversation with a question related to freelancing in fashion, but I'll, I'll end it. Um, I'll, I'll reword that a little bit to be related to just freelancing in general.

And so that would be what is one thing people never ask you about being a freelancer that you wish they would.

[00:51:23] **Chad:** one thing. People never ask me about being a freelancer that I wish they would.

Hmm. So, how about I answer it like this? Um, there are different stages in freelance life, and I don't think we speak about that enough. There are a lot of people who enter this lifestyle, whether it's freelancing in fashion or you're, you know, you're aiming to be a freelance writer or a freelance graphic designer.

Um, [00:52:00] there, there are stages that you go through. You're not gonna be the same. Throughout your entire journey. Mm. So when you're a beginning, freelancer, you're looking for work and you don't really know how to land work. Mm-hmm um, that's one of the things that I found in your book, like I'm, I'm really, really happy that you wrote this book.

I really am. It's one of the few books that I've read that. Gives you step by step. This is what you should do. So you have this section in there on pitching mm-hmm and when you start as a freelancer, you don't know anything. You don't know anybody. I remember being afraid to send out, um, connection requests on LinkedIn.

Mm. Like I remember that. Um, because I'm thinking like I'm a nobody, um, why would this person even accept? You know, I'm at the point now where not a week goes by without somebody sending me a connection request. Mm. And I accept all of them. like, I don't care who you are. Like, I'm not vetting you. I still get annoyed by the ones you send me this connection request.

And then the next [00:53:00] message is, Hey, I have this really awesome thing I'm selling. Totally. Can I send it to you?

[00:53:04] **Heidi:** Yeah. I get a million of.

[00:53:06] **Chad:** But I accept every single one because I remember, um, being afraid. To send out my own, you know, um, when you're an advanced freelancer, you get processes. Um, and then when you're elite, um, you know, you have the things that really, really supercharge your success.

Like an inbound funnel. I have like a, a six button mouse, and that has macros for every different program that I use. Mm-hmm I have special software, you know, but we don't ever talk about that. It's a journey. Like we all start somewhere and you're not gonna be the same over your entire

[00:53:43] **Heidi:** career. Yeah.

That's a good point. I'm glad you brought that up and I'll tell you out of over 150 guests, you're the first person to bring something up in that vein. So I appreciate

it. And I think it's very, very true and. I think it can be easy to look at the six figure freelancer just to like, you know, put it [00:54:00] into a bucket, right.

The person that's making a hundred thousand or a hundred dollars an hour, what have you, um, and just be like, I want all the things that they have, but they're stages and it's a process. Yeah. Right. You're learning you walk, you don't first learn to walk. You first learn to crawl. Then you learn to walk.

Then you learn to run. Then you can jump and stand on one leg and all the things, right. It's it's a journey. .

[00:54:22] **Chad:** Yes, it is a journey and I am grateful. I don't think you give yourself enough credit for this. I've read a lot of books on freelancing. Yeah. And your book is not even just about your book is specific to freelancing in fashion Uhhuh and it is literally the best Lance manual that I have.

Like just that one section there where you say, look, stop doing all this nonsense. You know, you. Pay for this and pay for that. You have this skill pitch people, cold call. If you have to send out cold emails, if you have to, you know, a lot of us try to, you know, purchase success, I'm gonna buy this fancy [00:55:00] gadget or this fancy course when really what I think you should be doing is focusing on the things that will actually bring you income pitch, your pitch, potential clients, man.

Yeah. We all start somewhere.

[00:55:13] **Heidi:** um, Chad, this has been super fun to chat with you, and I'm really great. We got the opportunity to have this conversation, so thank you for putting yourself out there and pitching to be on the show. Um, I really, really appreciate that. And, uh, where can everybody find you and connect with you online?

If maybe they just wanna say hi or maybe, you know, someone out there listening has a book that they need help with?

[00:55:35] **Chad:** Um, you can find me at writing nights. W R I T I N G. N I G H T s.org and easier URL is no snake oil.com and I'm also .

[00:55:52] **Heidi:** I didn't know that was

[00:55:53] **Chad:** you. Yes, that's me. No snake. all.com. It, it forwards directly to riding nights.org.

Okay. Um, you can fire me [00:56:00] on, on LinkedIn. Um, Chad Knight, I believe. Okay.

[00:56:04] **Heidi:** Awesome. Awesome. Well, thank you so much. We'll link to all of that in the show notes, and I really appreciate your time in sharing all of your, uh, insights and, and stories about your freelancing career.

[00:56:15] **Chad:** Thank you so much, Heidi. Like I am eternally grateful to you, man.

Thank you so much.

[00:56:23] **Heidi:** Thank you so much for listening to this episode of the successful fashion freelancer podcast. I hope you enjoyed this conversation, um, with Chad and I hope that you have the inspiration and the encouragement, uh, and the confidence that you need to raise those rates. Do yourself. A better service, do our industry a better service.

Do your clients a better service. It really is a win, win, win for everybody when you charge fair rates. Um, so I hope that was inspiring to you. Uh, so again, thank you for listening. I hope you're having an awesome day. Whatever it is you are doing. I also wanna give a huge shout out and thank you to two people behind the scenes that make the podcast possible.

First is to my husband, mark, who does [00:57:00] all of the tech and editing. And second is to Tara my right hand, unicorn kick ass of everything inside of successful fashion designer, who makes sure the show gets published, helps coordinate the interviews, all of that and so forth. So thank you, Tara and mark. And again, thank you to you for listening.

If you want to kickstart or grow your freelance career, we have a ton of free resources that you can grab head on over to. So [heidi.com/freelance](https://heidi.com/freelance), we will link that up in the show notes and grab all of our free resources to help you get started and kick. In your freelance career. And if you enjoyed this episode, make sure you hit subscribe wherever you are listening.

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