

# SFF166: Aashika

[00:00:00] **Heidi:** Welcome to another episode of these successful fashion, freelancer podcasts. I am your host, Heidi, and here on the show, we talk about true remote, freelancing and fashion, where you get to work when and where you want with multiple clients. We don't talk about temp, job freelancing, where you basically look and act like an employee, but you're a freelancer and you don't get any of the benefits of being an employee.

Uh, anyways, true remote freelancing. That is how I built my successful career in fashion for over a decade, earning a hundred thousand dollars. And that was after working as an employee where I got super burned out. And that was after having my own brand where I realized it was not what I wanted to do, cuz you don't make any money.

And it's tough. Afaf and freelancing is where I found true, true happiness, working in fashion, getting to do the work that I loved. And here on the show, we share stories from successful fashion freelancers from around the world with varying skill sets. That are kicking so much, but so that you can kick, [00:01:00] but to getting to work in fashion on your own terms today, I am chatting with Ashika Ashika is a lace and lingerie designer.

She lives in India and you guys she's seeing massive success in her freelance career. She has done so many small strategic things that have helped her get to where she is, is why she has multiple clients. She has a client on retainer that is giving her a good, solid base income. And in multiple clients that have been approaching her, she has putting herself out there.

She's been applying to some stuff on Upwork. She's been doing some cold pitching, but she's had a lot of clients that have come to her. So Ashika talks all about how she's made that happen. What changes she made to her LinkedIn profile. Literally the one change that she made to her LinkedIn profile that.

Got multiple brands approaching her within days. Um, what else is she doing? So many good things, so many good things. [00:02:00] She talks a lot about some of the confidence struggle that she has, um, has had and is, is still having the constant battle. We talk a lot about pricing. Um, she shares her prices openly. We talk about how she's charging a very fair wage that arguably is high for India.

Um, but she's getting that wage from brands. And I love this conversation because so many people think. if I live in India or if I live in another, um, you know, lower wage country, how can I charge a higher wage for maybe brands that are in the us or something like that. And it's totally possible. Ashika talks a lot about how she's done that.

Um, yeah, so a full transparency Ashika is a student inside my friends accelerator program, and she shares how that program has helped her see more success in her freelance career. If you are interested in becoming a successful fashion freelancer, and you want a little bit of support and help kickstarting or growing that freelance accelerator is a great place to start.

You can learn more about that program [00:03:00] by heading over to so [heidi.com/fast](https://heidi.com/fast) F a S T. And if you wanna get kick started right away, you can check out my best free resources at so [heidi.com/freelance](https://heidi.com/freelance) we'll link both those up in the show notes, make sure that you subscribe wherever you're listening. So you don't miss another episode.

and if you appreciate and enjoy the show, I'd be so grateful. If you'd take a few seconds to leave a review or rating on apple podcast or Spotify, they really do mean so much to, um, myself and my team who helped put the show together. We put a lot of effort into it, and we appreciate that so much. So enjoyment conversation with Ashika.

Thanks so much for listening. And here we go. Um, Ashika welcome to the successful fashion freelancer podcast. I just told you before we started recording how excited I am to hear everything cuz you do. I don't know. You just have a really interesting niche in the fashion world. Um, can you start out by introducing yourself to everybody listening and letting us know who you are and what you do in fashion?

[00:03:58] **Aashika:** okay. Hi, [00:04:00] Heidi. It's really nice to be on the podcast after, you know, following it and hearing it for so long. Yeah. So my name is AKA I'm from India originally, but, um, my niche is laundry and to be very specific lace design for laundry. Yeah. Um, so yeah, that's, that's my niche. And, um, I have just sort of kicked off my freelancing career in that space.

Um, yeah.

[00:04:28] **Heidi:** Okay. So, so many things that I wanna dive into, but let's maybe like start from the beginning. So mm-hmm I know you're in New York right now, but do you still live in

[00:04:39] **Aashika:** India? Yes. I still live in India. I still live in India. Yeah. Okay.

[00:04:43] **Heidi:** And you for a long time worked. For like factories designing the late, like tell us a little bit

[00:04:52] **Aashika:** about, yeah.

Okay. I'll just give you a brief history. So full disclaimer. I did go to design school. I studied at the [00:05:00] college of fashion. Okay. But pretty early on, like I did start by doing like a general fashion design and development course, but I did pretty early on while I was studying, realized that there was more value in sort of nicheing down.

Okay. Some gut feeling just told me to sort of niche down. Okay. So I changed courses like after my first year and I started doing something called contour design, which is a very, there only two universities in the world that do it. One is OCS and there's. In the UK called Montford and it's sort of more like a product design course where it's very focused on actually making a functional piece of clothing as well as, um, so it was contour was basically for laundry, um, fitted, um, swimwear, anything that's fitted to the contours of your body.

Okay. But mainly laundry and swimwear. So I, I sort of real, I, I don't know. Some gut feeling told me to niche down then even though everybody was sort of worried and they were like, you're narrowing your options. You know, why are [00:06:00] you doing this? But I just, something just told me to go for it. Yeah. And, um, that was smart.

I did that. I, I did that. And pretty early on, I knew that getting a job in the UK was almost an impossibility for me because of visa reasons. Ah, so I was, that's always a thing. So I was sort of mentally prepared. So I made the most of my time there, I got, and um, in my final year, this company from China sort of came to recruit, um, And, you know, I was in two minds.

I was like, do I wanna go to China? And my mom was like, you know, just do the interview, see what happens. You don't have to take the job. Yeah. So I just did it and because not many people wanted to apply to China because it's quite a challenging environment to live in. Um, you know, they interviewed a few of us.

They interviewed maybe like 15 people, six of us, and it just happened so fast that, um, I just went for it and the job was police design. And I had naturally

studied lace [00:07:00] design in college. I hadn't even studied textiles. I was very much doing, you know, regular laundry in fact, Without experimenting much with textile.

So a lot of it, I did learn on the job. Okay. And, uh, yeah, I just, I just went to China and, um, that was working for a larger manufacturing company that sort of supplies to brands like Victoria secret and gal climb. But that was, I mean, just a stroke of love being at the right place at the right time. Okay.

But, um, that's how I got into this whole lace space, which is very, very niche.

[00:07:32] **Heidi:** So like, we're talking about literally designing, like the repeating pattern of the lace design. And is there anything else entail in it? Like the picking out. The thread, what the material is, I don't even know.

[00:07:49] **Aashika:** Yeah. Yeah. So, um, you know, I listened to your podcast with, um, Sophia luon.

Yeah. And, uh, with Laurie. Yeah. And with cat DKA. Yeah. So what I do is [00:08:00] something at the intersection of those two things. So in many ways it is life print design, because a lot of it is about knowing how a repeat looks visually Uhhuh, but then a lot of it is about, um, You know, it's a little more detailed than print design, because you're not thinking about, you have to think about how the yarns are actually slotted and how they go into a machine.

Okay. So there is a technical developer that, that you work with. But my job mainly was because I was the only person with a linger background in that office. Okay. Um, everybody else there sort of came from a graphic or a textile background. My job was to actually imagine what the lace would look like three dimensionally.

Okay. Which is why, you know, like what you say about having a need is so, so important because if you, if you know something or you see things differently to what everyone else does, people do value your skills and they do, you don't even have to compete with anybody else because you're so unique in that very specific skill set.

Yeah. [00:09:00] So I sort of created the job for myself in a way, because I was there. I was the latest team, 3d person, so I would design conceptual laundry for them. Okay. Like test out the latest, make the linger. Um, I also did a bit of sales, but I would pitch because I spoke English and, um, ah, okay. You know, mostly everyone else spoke Mandarin.

So, um, that's just sort of how I got into it. But that's when I really started liking something as detailed as lace design. Cause it is very, very detailed. You can spend, like I was spending like six hours a day just drawing, which was my dream

[00:09:34] **Heidi:** job I can imagine. Oh yeah, yeah. Okay. So where are we on the timeline?

Like when did you graduate? When did you go to China? What years was this? So

[00:09:43] **Aashika:** I, I, I graduated in 2017. Okay. And I went to China immediately after I spent a good three years there. And then the pandemic broke out. Yeah. So I literally came home for a holiday for a week and I never went back. Oh. So it was quite [00:10:00] sudden, um, you know

[00:10:01] **Heidi:** yeah.

You were, I think the pandemic. Yeah. Okay. So at what point did you start, did you lose your job then? Or were you able to work remote.

[00:10:14] **Aashika:** So I was able to work remotely for a year because the company I worked with, they did want to keep me, but then after the year there was no, no way I could go back. It was the restriction for quite, um, intense yeah.

China, they weren't letting people back in. So at that point I took per call to sort of, um, you know, design. Um, and I was on very good terms with my boss and everything because, you know, it was a good company to work with. Yeah. Yeah. And at that point, mid pandemic, I sort of decided to, because I didn't know what to do.

I didn't, you know, like at that point I hadn't really. Come across freelancing as an option. Okay. To be very honest. Yeah. So my thought was get a job in India where the pay is not great. Yeah. If you work for somebody else. Yeah. Or it was to start [00:11:00] my own brand. And so I did the latter because like I did it very spontaneously and you know, I read about your experience with your brand and how, you know, you have this brand and it was doing well, but you just paint it every minute of it.

And I could relate to that so much. Yeah. Why is that? Because you know, you, you know, and I, I actually even spoke to Laurie and she was really nice. That's

what I love about this entire community, because I've gotten to meet so many other freelancers. Who've been so nice. Yeah. And I spoke to both Laurie and Sophia.

Yeah. And you know, you think when you're a designer, you think your dream is to have your own brand, but no one tells you that having your own brand, a lot of it is actually sending out packages and manufacturing stuff. And, you know, especially in the pandemic where I'm sure like in regular circumstances, it's hard.

But during the pandemic, I was literally like in India, lockdown was very intense. So, you know, I didn't have any factories or any, I had one tailor who was sort of helping me with the extra orders and strangely enough, I got loads [00:12:00] of orders. Perfect. Because I was doing pajamas and night wear, but, you know, I was, I was just so burnt out and still checked out and just making everything myself.

I didn't even get time to design. Yeah. You know, um, between dealing with suppliers. Yeah. Manufacturing, doing it all by myself, making my own website. It, I just was really one I and really, really unhappy. Yeah. Yeah. And I, and I was so, you know, um, conflicted because I wanted to shut it down and, and I was like, this is mean I'm a failure.

And then I was that's when I spoke to Laurie and she was so nice because she told me how she do the same thing. And she's like, you know, at some point you do take a call if it's not making you happy. Yeah. And that's around the time, like I came across. More of your freelance episodes and, um, you know, okay.

Started watching some of your videos on how to go about freelancing. Yeah. And weirdly at that point, somebody, you know, you made that video about meshing down. I think it was on YouTube. It wasn't even, this was before I signed up for fast, [00:13:00] but, um, that very minute I changed my, um, you know, like status on LinkedIn to lace and laundry designer, because I was like, let me try this.

What was it before? And, um, it was fashion designer, like, because

[00:13:14] **Heidi:** oh, like just real broad,

[00:13:15] **Aashika:** you know? Okay. Really broad because you know, they want many laundry jobs advertised out there. Yeah. And, you know, I thought, okay. I was trying to convince myself that, okay. I, I, I saw it as a shortcoming.

The fact that I was so niche, I didn't see it as a strength because all the jobs in India at that point were for fashion designer.

Okay. Not for. Something as specific, as long as it is. So I was like, okay, I have to convince them that I can also do regular clothes. Even though my degree is not, this was a very different mindset. And then I came across your video where you said, you know, you niche down. And I said, you know, I have nothing to lose.

Let me try this. And the minute I just did that, somebody approached me on LinkedIn wanting me to design, linger, just a simple act of changing that key word. [00:14:00]

[00:14:00] **Heidi:** I am like, I just made like a surprise looking face, but I'm really not. So,

[00:14:07] **Aashika:** yeah, so that was when I was like, okay, there might be something to this because if somebody's approaching me on LinkedIn yeah.

To do this, and I was completely unprepared, like I think most of the people who've interviewed, they started from scratch while I sort of shifted from a job to like setting up my brand. Yeah. And keeping it so now freelancing. Yeah. So I think for me it was more just changing the approach and the mindset that sort of helped me, you know, get into that head space because yeah.

[00:14:39] **Heidi:** It's so interesting because you said that like when you were in school, which, you know, we're so young when we're in school and like, I don't know. I mean, I look back at when I was in school. I didn't have a great like view on not great, but not very sophisticated view on like life or business or being strategic about my career.

And [00:15:00] you had this like inkling to niche down. And then you almost like went the opposite direction later. you know, for a minute.

[00:15:10] **Aashika:** Yeah. Yeah, I did. Because, you know, though, I have this gut feeling sometimes when you listen to all the noise around you and you know, when you apply for jobs, like jobs that are already advertised, it is actually very rare to find something for launch linger, you know, like specifically advocate out there because I don't know why.

So I don't know. I started doubting myself and I was. You know, did I do the wrong thing? And then I just on a whim just changed his back to luxury. And

two people approached me. Actually, one of whos is a pretty big linger brand. I constantly disclosed their name. Okay. But just imagine, um, the biggest luxury brand out there, they approached me for a job.

I didn't get it because of these other reasons, but ah, visa. Okay. Um, I was like, okay. They found me, you know, sitting in the us [00:16:00] and they found me in India. There must be something to this. Yeah. And, um, that's when I decided I really wanted to, you know, focus and, and just, you know, um, focus on my skills, like what I'm actually good at, which is not the business side of it necessarily, but the very specific technical, um, side of laundry at least.

Yeah.

[00:16:23] **Heidi:** Okay. So you're back in India, you started your own brand. You're getting exhausted. from doing this. You're like not really getting to design or doing anything fun. So you started exploring, you were starting to listen to some podcasts of mine and thinking, okay. Maybe freelance, like where was your mind at?

Like, what sounded good about that? Or what sounded like that was a good match.

[00:16:50] **Aashika:** So this was literally the beginning of this year, to be honest. Um,

[00:16:55] **Heidi:** when, okay, so beginning of 20, 22, 20, 20, 22. [00:17:00] Yeah. Yeah. Okay. And we're in July right now. So.

[00:17:02] **Aashika:** Yes. So around January 20, 22, um, this, uh, person in Australia approached me wanting to set up a brand in India and they, they were in the whole business space, but they didn't really have any knowledge about, um, linger.

So they wanted somebody, they wanted to invest. Um, and start a launch day brand. And I wanted someone to come on board as a, as a technical consultant. And, uh, at that point I was completely unprepared because I didn't really know. You know, when you go from applying to lots of jobs to having your, I didn't even know this was the thing like, um, in my head, a consultant was somebody that worked with a company like S and young or KPMG, like one of those finance.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I know. Totally business consulting type, you know? So it cost me off guard, which is when I started like seriously, like Googling stuff. And of course I did look up your, your videos to, you know, how much do you have to be charge? How do you put this in a contract? Yeah. How do you make sure you get paid?

I don't know any of [00:18:00] this. Yeah, but the op for me, I think the opportunity came first. I was completely unprepared and then I found, uh, a lot of your content. Okay. Then that first experience was not great because the person then started trying to negotiate after I'd already done lots of work. They tried to low ball after that, which, you know, again, I started doubting myself.

I had a, I had another instance where somebody was really nasty and they said something like, oh, you're overpricing your services. And I, I crosscheck this and I wasn't overpricing my services at all. Yeah. But you know, I think the more I started, um, following your stuff and listening to your content, I realized that first of all, there op you can do this for people in other countries.

Mm-hmm , um, you know, and sometimes you don't realize how much, you know, till you actually have the opportunity to sort of, you know, implement that particular skill like tech for example. Yes. I love doing tech tax. Yeah. I think like I was made to make like, as much as you love Excel, [00:19:00] I love tech. I just love doing tech back.

Yeah. So, um, you know, and the fact that it doesn't occur to me that that would real value to somebody else, because for me, I can do it in my space. Yeah. But it is something that somebody with a non fashioned background would need, like on the way to a factory. So, yeah. Um, so I think, yeah, beginning of this year, that's when that opportunity happened and I started listening to your podcast more frequently.

I downloaded some of your guides. And then I think around may, I would say is when I decided to, to sort of, um, you know, sign up for us because I already had three clients and I just wanted to find a better way to sort of, um, market my services and package my services up as a, as a laundry design consultant.

Yeah. Um, You know, so, um, yeah, so that is, and that really did help me a lot, especially sort of the community within, um, you know, past where, you know, you see other people going through the same [00:20:00] thing. So if you stand out in yourself, you can always cross check somebody else's through the same thing. Yeah.

So, yeah.

[00:20:07] **Heidi:** Okay. So let's talk about just a little bit. So is July 27th today, cuz this isn't gonna air take until like August or maybe even early September. So it's July 27th. You just joined in may. Um, I remember you were on one of, I think it was probably the Q and a call in may mm-hmm so like two months ago and you were asking, um, I am a lace designer.

Is that too niche? Mm-hmm and we talked about it and some of the other students on the call chimed in a little bit, and then you like came back to the next call like a month later and you were like, I got a client or I got another client or I forget what happened, but like all of a sudden it was like, okay, no, it wasn't too niche.

There are cause you were, you had been, and I don't wanna like take over the conversation here, but I remember very specifically, like you had [00:21:00] worked in China for the manufac, like for the factory side, right? Mm-hmm they were manufacturing the lace and then the lace was being sold to the brands. And so you were like, what kind of opportunities might there be to design lace if it's not actually for the lace manufacturer, like are brands actually designing their own lace?

So I wanna like hear a little bit about what happened between that call, where we were like, well, we think you could do it. It's worth pursuing and where we.

[00:21:29] **Aashika:** so actually after that call, I remember something you said to me was, um, either you can do more research into late. Yeah. Or you could look at your niche being linger.

And, um, there are lots of other skills in linger that I am quite well versed in like the pattern cutting or the making of the tech pack. Yeah. So I decided to start researching more about lace. I got in touch with some factories that make lace some companies that produce lace because for lace it's normally like a larger [00:22:00] corporation that sort of makes it right.

It's not an individual designer. Right. But it is, I did start doing my research and networking on that side. So I got in touch with the company in Spain. I got in touch with the company. I got, I found one other place designer in the whole white world who's freelancing. And she does embroid. Ah, which is different from, you know, knit list.

But then I also like, um, I saw one of your strategy sessions with another linger designer where, um, you know, you talked about how there are certain, very specific technical skills, which are of higher value, like the fashion game, like creating. Um, so I sort of just brushed up on those. I already sort of had a foundation, but I brushed up on those.

So I got a couple of, um, clients who required those skills. Okay. And so I decided my niche would be launch away till I could figure the listing. And strangely enough, this, this very morning, I got contacted by somebody who based again in the us who wanted to design a custom [00:23:00] label for their brand. So I know you wanted me to like fill you in on this when something happened, but it literally just happened today.

So like hours ago, Like this morning. Yeah. I had another that's amazing. And this was good. They wanted their logo to sort of be a motif in the latest and sort of incorporate it into that. So, um, yeah. So with late, it's definitely working with larger factories or at least collaborating with somebody that can actually exhaust for you while with laundry rate.

So like, what I do is a combination of the two, I sort of look at where the multi sits on the body. Like, because with design it's, you know, you have your surface design and you have your silhouette. Yeah. For, for most clothes. Um, now for laundry rate, there's not much you can actually do with the shape.

There is some stuff, but some stuff sort of works. Technically you can't really book you. Other than maybe experimenting with the straps. So a lot of the innovation is in the, in the surface, um, textile, whether it's the actual [00:24:00] technical, uh, features the fabric has, or it's the surface design. So, uh, my job is actually sort of, sort of looking at, you know, like you have placement print for, for print designers, web that on the body.

Yep. So what I do is I sort of look at where the mochi sticks on the body so that it looks flattering so that it can be ergonomically produced. So there's less wastage mm-hmm and then how to make that feet on, on, on like a piece of lace that's about around, I would say 23 centimeters wide. Yeah. So just where does it sit on the body?

How expensive would it be to manufacture it? Because it is expensive to manufacture. Yeah.

[00:24:38] **Heidi:** I mean, even machine made. Yeah. Right. Like you need to be doing massive quantit.

[00:24:43] **Aashika:** Yeah. So it is a, unless you sort of do, um, embroid where you're embroidering it on this spot, which is much lower quantities, more, it's more expensive per piece, but it's, you can make lower quantities, right?

While with limited list, you have to [00:25:00] manufacture at least a thousand meters. So it's only the bigger brands that would probably wanna invest in, in doing that, you know? Um, yeah,

[00:25:08] **Heidi:** doing that. Okay. So it sounds like most of your clients have approached you. Is that true?

[00:25:16] **Aashika:** Yeah. And I, I mean, I haven't actually, I'm still a little scared about like sending bold emails, but I did find something on Upwork.

Yeah. Which worked out really well. Oh, good. And I, yeah. And I had a, and then there was one which was like a job interview, but I sort of turned it into a consulting thing because I didn't wanna actually work a full-time job because now I actually wanted freelance and work with a variety of people. So I sort of turned it into a and I, and she's also a startup, so she couldn't actually like pay what I need, like.

My hourly sure. That, you know, you can work something out where you pay me a retainer and I give you 20 hours a week. Okay. And she wants me to do everything. So all the fears I had about being [00:26:00] pigeonholed, um, I'm facing the opposite where she sort of wants me to do everything from design to trend, to, you know, but in the space of not I'm being from, with myself about sticking to the nausea.

[00:26:11] **Heidi:** Okay. So other than the upward client, are these other brands connecting with you just via LinkedIn?

[00:26:20] **Aashika:** Um, yes, via LinkedIn. And the one I had today was actually a referral from another freelancer. Okay. Um, who I'd gotten in touch with? She, she was up on five, but she also designed, um, she also does laundry and she says, you know, I had a couple of people wanting me to do list and if you want, we can collaborate or I can, you know, refer them to you.

So, um, which is another thing I really like about this whole space that people aren't competitive like that, because I think you can make your own skill so unique. Yeah. You don't really have to be better than somebody. You can be

[00:26:54] **Heidi:** different. Yeah. Like you said, you talked to Laurie who is also a [00:27:00] based linger designer, Sophia lingerie designer.

Yeah. Um, uh, Yeah. I know two knit sweater designers inside of fast who have like become friends. They like share resources and stuff. It is so true that like there's enough space for everybody. And everybody has like enough of like a unique offering and some might just be slightly different. There's enough brands out there that it really just becomes this beautiful ecosystem.

I think, um,

[00:27:28] **Aashika:** Um, yeah, yeah, for sure. And you know, for me to be very honest, like I've never actually been into fashion for the glamorous theme side of it. I actually like being behind the scenes. Yeah. Like I'm a fashion nerd. I actually, like one of the things I did not like about having my own brand was I have to model everything myself because COVID and I was just doing everything myself and I just didn't like that side of it.

I sort of like being behind the scenes, sort of doing tech back. Yeah. Doing quality school, doing, um, even design work, but yeah. [00:28:00]

[00:28:00] **Heidi:** Behind the scenes. Yeah. Yeah. So what you think it is about like talk a little, well, actually I wanna talk to, I don't, I wanna talk about the conversation you had that was like kind of a job interview that you turned into a consulting conversation.

Cause I've talked to a lot of freelancers who are like, you know, they, they got in touch with the brand somehow or another, and then they get on and it does feel like it turns into a, a. Job interview and they're, they kind of struggle, like, try to turn that around. So I wanna touch on that. So I, I bring that up cause I don't forget, but I wanna talk, I wanna just go quickly back to these brands are finding you on LinkedIn.

Like, was it literally, you just changed your profile name from fashion designer to lace linger. So

[00:28:46] **Aashika:** first it was just changing it into lay and leisure a specialist. Okay. Um, and, and, you know, it took a, in terms of my mindset, it took a lot for me to do that because I do tend [00:29:00] to undervalue my own skills maybe sometimes.

But then I, there was this one big brand that reached out to me and I was like, wow. If they found me, you know, that was validating. That, that, that was validating, I think. Um, you know, and, um, so I was like, you know, I can't do this if they want me, like, why can't I just do this for myself? Like what's stopping me because, you know, sometimes when you do apply for certain jobs and in India, it's very competitive because there are so many talented people, um, that it's very, it's very close to competitive, you know?

Yeah. So, um, so that was a bit disheartening when I came back, when I was sort of applying for jobs and pay was like one 10th of what my say in China was. And, and it's because there are so many talented people and there, you know, create like there lots of creative people and. It is very competitive. So I think for me the thing that I sort of led with my experience in China.

Okay. I led because while I was in China, one of my [00:30:00] designs was chosen by kale. Okay. So indirectly, you know, something that was in kale summer collection last year was designed by me. Now, for me, it doesn't matter if KA trying gives me that credit, but I know yeah. That I did that. I have the paper to show that I did do that.

Yeah. So I think that that helped, but you know, to be honest, it, it, it's just about being confident in that and knowing your worth and what you bring to the table. Like, um, and I think with this client, she's a startup as well. So she sort of, you know, she's still working her job or whatever, and she wants to start this and I didn't even quote her the price in the beginning, but I did what she said.

I sort of listened to what she needed. I listened to her first. And then I said, look, um, this is what I do. This is where I can help you. So. Pitched her first. I was like, this is how I can help you. And then really towards the end of the conversation, when she came to price, I first asked her what her budget [00:31:00] was.

Mm-hmm and she told me, and I said, look, um, then I told her what I charged for hour and, um, which is, I think relatively low by us standards, but it's quite high

[00:31:11] **Heidi:** in India. Would you be willing to share that?

[00:31:15] **Aashika:** yeah, it's on up work. So I charge \$35 an hour, 20

[00:31:18] **Heidi:** 35, 35 35. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Very fair. Yeah,

[00:31:22] **Aashika:** very fair.

Um, and, um, so she said, look, um, you know, if you're charging \$35 per hour and we calculated how much it would be for me to work fulltime. Right. Right. Uh, then she was like, okay, you know, I can't truly afford that. And I said, how about you take me on as a consultant because you won't have to worry about things like, you know, because if you are an employer, you have to sort of worry about things like pension or whatever, like other security and healthcare and insurance.

Yeah. So she, I think she's also pretty new to this. So I sort of grew up a contract and I sent it to. You know, grew up a freelance contact. And [00:32:00] then she was like, okay, let me, you know, figure this out. So it was more like me guiding her and leading her into the conversation, the pursuit towards knew, but I was very transparent from the beginning.

Yeah. About this is what people pay me. Um, you know, and N like internationally and for the other project I had in India, that is what I would say. Yeah. Um, that is what, what, so I'm very transparent. I do lead with sort of asking them what they need sort of, so that, by the end of that conversation, they really know that they want me.

Yeah. And, uh, You know, uh, and I sort of tell them, because if it's not a match, it's not a match you have to sort of yeah, of course. You know, but it takes a while to get, get to that mindset because when you're on the job application stage, you're just desperate to get that job, whatever it is. But I think over here, it's more like you sort of, you get to choose and new, safe is a good match.

So I even told her, I said, look, I don't, I want this to work for you. I don't want you to lose [00:33:00] money if you have a messy back. Yeah. You know, this is why tech packs are important. Yeah. This is why. Um, and you know, I don't want you to spend money excessively either. So I, I can guarantee you that if I give you four hours a day, this is the quality of work I'll deliver rather than just quantity and, you know?

Yeah. So it, it is, it does take, it does take a bit to sort of switch people to that mindset, especially in India, because it's not now freelancing is taking off more in this space, but it's not really been a thing, you know, pre COVID, so yeah. Yeah.

[00:33:32] **Heidi:** Okay. So the conversation going from like job interview to more like freelance consultant, sounds like it really just came from you kind of taking the reins a little bit and starting to ask her more questions.

Like, well, what do you need support with? Where are you at right now? Like what challenges are you facing? And then getting her to start talking. And most people will just start talking, especially, you know, they're, they're thinking about this brand. They have this idea wherever they're at. [00:34:00] Like, they're excited to talk about that.

So you just kind of turn to tables to get them talking about that. Yeah. Um, cool. So jumping back to that LinkedIn thing though, like, um, you, you said you changed it from fashion designer to lace and lingerie specialist, this big brand contacted you. It didn't work out for visa reasons. But was that like really all you changed on your profile and then you got like your description and like maybe some screenshot, like the portfolio screenshots or something, but like, I didn't, I

[00:34:31] **Aashika:** have, I didn't even put portfolios.

Oh, okay. To be honest. Okay. Um, I just changed, so I think very unconsciously I've like, I think LinkedIn has very good. Co. Yeah. So for that first client who approached me, he said, when I type launch a designer, India, you are one of two names that comes up. And I was surprised by that because I guess not many people are nicheing down.

People do tend to want to generalize because of that fear factor. You know that what if, but I just [00:35:00] want everyone to know that I think it's better to each down, because I now have situations where somebody approached me wanting me to make a denim tech pack and I don't wanna make a denim like denim

[00:35:10] **Heidi:** and linger are like pretty opposite ends of the spectrum.

[00:35:13] **Aashika:** yeah, exactly. So, or, or, you know, um, or even people, but can you also do this? I'm sure. Be fine. Yeah. And then I really have to think about it, you know? Yeah. So I definitely think it's. In terms of meshing down for sure. Yeah. Um, but, and, and then, okay, so after like about two, three months of changing that, that status on LinkedIn, I did, I did opt for the paid version, but I don't think it's necessary.

Like I actually got at least three people approaching me without being before that doing

[00:35:46] **Heidi:** okay. Okay. Yeah. And I've, I've listened to podcasts outside of the fashion space. Um, but just about a SEO specifically on LinkedIn, like I'm that big of a nerd [00:36:00] and it does have great SEO, but you do need to be really specific.

If you have just fashion designer in there, nobody is gonna find you because everybody else has fashion designer in there. Um, one of our other students told me that, um, she put like CLO 3d and instantly was like starting to get. yeah. People reaching out to her, right. Like just be really specific with what you're offering.

Um, and don't be that generalist because everybody else is trying to be that generalist and they're not getting. Yeah.

[00:36:33] **Aashika:** Yeah. I love that. Well, and, and it's frustrating because, you know, if you do look at jobs and Upwork, um, you, you would find more like print jobs or print design jobs. Yeah. Those, you know, yeah.

Sleepwear jobs or whatever. Sometimes I am tempted because I do love working and I constantly, okay. Another thing I did after, um, doing the past courses, I spent one hour, every single day on up work. I'm gonna move off it [00:37:00] eventually because that 20% custody take does. I know

[00:37:02] **Heidi:** they take a it's a lot. Yeah,

[00:37:05] **Aashika:** but, um, I do spend about, um, an hour a day between LinkedIn and Upwork, just sending out proposals.

Okay. That is one thing that has been a game changer because for every, it took me his 30 proposals before I got my first, um, gig off Upwork. Okay. Okay. So that's definitely one other thing that I learned from, from you about, you know, just sending, you do have to send out whether it's a cold email, whether it's, um, you know, and once you meet down, it is easier to do that and be specific about it.

Yeah.

[00:37:39] **Heidi:** And I like to look at it as like planting seeds. Right. Like you can send some of that stuff out. Yeah. And it might not turn into anything right then, but it could turn into something in 3, 6, 12 months from there. Um, yeah.

[00:37:51] **Aashika:** Um,

[00:37:51] **Heidi:** yeah, exactly. Yeah. I like that. You've just like part of your routine.

[00:37:56] **Aashika:** Yeah, it's just something now I'm like sort of addicted to doing it.

Like [00:38:00] I can't, you know, I have to do it even if I'm on holiday, like I'm on holiday right now. Yeah. I'm still doing that. And I'm still working and answering emails.

[00:38:09] **Heidi:** Yeah. Um, yeah. Okay. So talk a little bit about like what you said you didn't have anything on LinkedIn for your portfolio. You didn't add any screenshots.

Like what do you have for a portfolio?

[00:38:26] **Aashika:** I literally do what you said in terms of, I have like a little PDF, um, and I've made like, actually first I had one big PDF with all my work, but then a lot of my, like when I worked in China, a lot of the projects were very different. There was something for a sportswear brand.

There was something for a linger brand. There was something called Victoria secret. There was something for Calvin line. So putting it all together in one portfolio just didn't make sense because it would look very inconsistent. Yeah. So I, I have these like little mini nugget portfolios of like three to four pages.

Okay. So I have one [00:39:00] which is actually still from my final year in college, which is showing my patent cutting skills. Okay. Then I have one which shows my illustration skills because illustrating is something I really would wanna get laundry illustration or this illustration is something I really. Which I'd done with concept Paris.

Um, when they had come to China to work with the company I was with. So we worked very closely. There're a trend forecasting company and the lady that owns it is amazing. Yeah. She was, you know, really great to work with. So, um,

I did a sort of illustration, so I, I just call out what works. I have one for like launch illustrations.

I have one for, um, tech pass. Now I have one for, um, patent cutting. And so it's all still in the vein of launching, but I haven't made down so much that it's, I've only doing tech pack. Right. So far I've done tech pass and I've done some design, but within the space of laundry, I have, you know, a five page one for [00:40:00] which shows off my illustration skills or my mood board skills, or, you know, my presentation skills.

I have one for, um, yeah. Technical stuff and one

[00:40:09] **Heidi:** for patent cutting. Okay. Gotcha. Gotcha. And then you just share whichever one makes the most sense. Yeah,

[00:40:14] **Aashika:** I share the one that's relevant. Yeah. Because like, sometimes they may not, um, need that. Like for example, I had somebody who approached me for a text pack and though I usually wanted to include my Calvin client one because that's the gem of my collection portfolio.

I didn't, because it wasn't relevant. It was more design and she wanted, you know, that was more of a latest design and she wanted like a latex sort of BDSM tech concept. That's very different. Yeah. Very different. So, you know, same thing as it is. Um, I didn't send her that. I just sent her another launch latex pack.

[00:40:50] **Heidi:** Okay. Gotcha. Gotcha. All right. So very simple on the portfolio, just a few different PDFs that like make sure whatever you're gonna be showing to the client is [00:41:00] relevant for them. Mm-hmm mm-hmm like, what about your pricing? How did you come up with that number and how do you feel like that's going. ,

[00:41:10] **Aashika:** you know, to be very honest, that's still a work in progress.

because I did, I just did a tech back project where I feel like I really underpriced it, uh, because I didn't charge hourly. I set a fixed rate and oh, okay. I mean, I enjoyed doing it, but I feel like I couldn't charge more. So I, for surprising what I did was first, I, I, what I was being paid in China was, I mean, by, by international standards, by China standards.

Great. Because the cost of living there is low mm-hmm and it was more than enough for me to, you know, live independently and save and have a nice department in everything. India standards very low, like the salaries, like what,

like a designer would get maybe paid starting is what's equivalent of maybe \$180 a month.

So the maximum would [00:42:00] be

[00:42:00] **Heidi:** \$500 a month. That was your India. That was your China salary.

[00:42:05] **Aashika:** No, that wasn't, that was like that's for the average salary for a designer in India. If, if they're working for someone else.

[00:42:11] **Heidi:** Okay. Full-time designer in India, you're looking at 180 to \$500. Yeah. For full time. Exactly.

[00:42:18] **Aashika:** Okay. Yeah. Full time. Okay. Um, so I think with my, what I did was, um, the company in the us that approached me, uh, the figure that they quoted, I sort of took that as what I was worth, because if they were willing to pay me back. Yeah. Um, that was on the higher end. So it did scare off a couple of Indian clients I had.

So I do need to temper it based on who the client is. But on average, I settled at around \$35 an hour because I also looked at Upwork and looked at what people were charging there. And since I've only got maybe two projects prior Upwork, I would raise it at some point, but I do wanna get more experience under my belt for [00:43:00] things like deck pack and, um, you know, more like luxury patent cutting stuff.

And then probably when I feel comfortable, I will raise it a lot. So. Okay.

[00:43:10] **Heidi:** So you have a client India though, do you not. yes. Are you making \$35 an hour from them?

[00:43:18] **Aashika:** Because in India that's but I, what I'm doing is I'm getting a retainer, which is say the equivalent. I don't know the conversion, but I'm getting like, um, a monthly retainer somehow.

So that is like a stable source of income, which is great. And I spend four hours a day doing that for a day, five days a week. And then I don't wanna do it in India because people space is opening up in India and I want to, you know, learn more about the Indian markets and stuff. But at the same time, I also, I've kept the flexibility where I have this one consistent consultancy sort of gig, hopefully for the next year.

And then, um, I sort of am trying to get more stuff in other parts of the world, like the us. So I've had two clients from the [00:44:00] us already, and one might again, turn into a longer term thing. So I don't know. So I, I would like to keep maybe three at a time, like one consistent one and maybe two shorter projects.

So you diversify in terms of, yeah,

[00:44:12] **Heidi:** totally. I love this though, because, um, I mean, a lot of people think like, well, if I live in India, how can I charge us rates? Like the us company is gonna be like, no, I want the, you know, \$3, \$2 an hour India rate, right? I mean, if a full, if a designer's working full time making 200 to 500 bucks a month, you know, mm-hmm, , I think a lot of people have this perception in their head that like, well then the us brand just wants cheap, inexpensive labor.

Right. But you are, and we have multiple client, multiple students from India. I use India just cuz mm-hmm I just always exist. The example that comes up. But, um, and that's where you live and stuff, but, um, [00:45:00] we have multiple students in India that are charging, like for India wages, like making a very fair rate, like earning \$35 an hour.

Mm-hmm yeah. Very comfortable us rate. Yeah. So, um, and I like how you kind of thought about that. You looked at a bunch of different scenarios, you looked at like, okay, well, what is this other job from the us paying, et cetera. What did you make in China? Which I know you said was a little bit low, depending on where, what standards for China was fine.

Um,

[00:45:27] **Aashika:** No for China. It was actually great. It was double of say what? Like, it was like an expat salary in a way. It was double of what? Like, I can't quite disclose the exact amount.

[00:45:38] **Heidi:** Totally fair. Yeah. Happy about that. It was very

[00:45:41] **Aashika:** good. It was, let's say it was higher than India, but still lower than, than the U us or the UK.

Sure, sure. So I don't know what, what, like, I think rent is course much higher on places like New York, but I know rent in London is really high. Yeah. So E even if, as a designer you made something like, um, you know, [00:46:00] like

even if you made double of the minimum wage or whatever, even if you made a thousand pounds a month, half of it, we just go on rent.

Yeah. So the, in India, the great thing is it's not that expensive to live mm-hmm and, you know, I sort of live, um, live at home with my mom. Right. Mm-hmm so that's quite normal in India to do that, even, you know? Um, so I think that's sort of works out as well. Um, yeah, it is, it is a mindset thing, to be honest, because I've had lots of people in India tell me that, oh, you overcharge, but then I get back with, but I'm the only person that can give you this, so

[00:46:36] **Heidi:** deal with it.

And you're getting paying work. So, you know, yeah. It

[00:46:41] **Aashika:** was hard. It was really in the beginning, there, there were where people were like, oh, you are overcharging or whatever. But then that's when I actually started looking at international account. Okay. And looking,

[00:46:52] **Heidi:** and then that's where you started getting some good traction.

Yeah.

[00:46:56] **Aashika:** Yeah. And then I got something good in India as well. So  
[00:47:00]

[00:47:00] **Heidi:** which you compromise the price on, but it's a good BA like you said, it's a good, it's a consistency. Consistency. Yeah. I think anytime too, like no matter where the client's located, no matter what their budget is, if they're giving you like a solid 20 hours a week or even 10 hours, like if it's consistent retainer based ongoing, you adjust that price accordingly.

Right. Um, mm-hmm okay. So. Something, you said a couple times and then have kind of jumped around on is about like mindset and confidence, right. So you said, I, you know, you had your three years working at the factory in China or the manufacturer in China, um, then you made a comment, you were kind of like, I don't know, do I really know that much, but then you made a comment that like, well, once I started doing things, I realized I knew more than I actually thought, but then you still keep dropping comments of like, well, once I have the [00:48:00] confidence or once I like know a little bit more, I mean, talk to us a little bit about like, just cuz this is whether people wanna talk, say it or not.

So, so many people are like, well, I just need the strategy and I need the pitch template and I need the thing and I need the thing and I need the tool and those are really helpful. But for 99% of. 99% of it is like the mental blocks that we have in our head. Yes. So talk a little bit about like where you're at with that and, and maybe the challenges you're still having, having, or some things that have helped, like where you're at.

[00:48:41] **Aashika:** Okay. Okay. So I am, uh, the full child for imposter syndrome. , that's my problem. So, and my, my trajectory in fashion has also been quite volatile as in, you know, I got into LCF. Um, and I, I, I, I did learn a [00:49:00] lot there because, um, my course leader specifically with somebody who had worked in industry, she used to work with Victoria secrets.

So she was very practical. Okay. It wasn't, it wasn't the very AGA type fashion that, you know, like, well, a lot

[00:49:12] **Heidi:** of it, a lot schools can be that.

[00:49:15] **Aashika:** Yeah. So my course specifically, like LCF women's were definitely more Avan God. Okay. But, um, my course leader was very sensible and we always had to prove how we would sell what we made.

Mm. So she was very much marketing focused so that I'm not gonna deny that that helps mm-hmm and having. Um, I think for me, it was just taking that leap of faith and going to China, which now that I look back was quite scary thing to do because I did not know the language I had to learn Mandarin over there.

It was, it was difficult, but I loved the job because the difference of being China and see other countries in the fashion industry, the fashion industry, there wasn't toxic. It was a very corporatized office life environment. It had all the [00:50:00] benefits of a corporate job and it was a very professional environment.

I remember my boss. I mean, he was fantastic. Both my bosses were, and he was very apologetically asked me to make coffee because he didn't know how to use the machine. And in my head I'm like, I was mentally prepared to be treated badly because that is what happens in lots of internships, you know? Yeah.

Yeah. I guess I was really lucky in this particular China example, it was difficult living. There was hard learning the language, dealing with the food, everything was different, but I think the work environment there was be was really great for me, maybe. So that's really boosted my confidence. So then coming back to

India after COVID and finding it almost impossible to get a job, um, you know, that that could pay me even half of what I made in China, because I, I guess in China, they value creativity because, um, they're very good at making really good products and they're very good at recognizing talent in other people and learning from them.

So I think they value somebody [00:51:00] that's taught outside the box, but in India everyone's, and, and the way of, you know, you have great textile, you have this fabric, you know, it's part of the culture and everything and India. The problem is it's not a problem, but people are only willing to pay for bridal wear because India's all about wedding.

Mm. And it's about what shows it's that conspicuous consumption of? I will pay money for it if it's, if I can show it. Right. So laundry day, I mean, now the mindset is changing, but people aren't really willing to spend that much on laundry day and, um, laundry is expensive to manufacture. So I usually struggled with that.

So I was making night wear and even then I was barely making enough of a profit and I wanted to pay the TA my tailor a fair wage. So I literally gave him what I was making myself. This

[00:51:49] **Heidi:** is when you had your brand. .

[00:51:51] **Aashika:** Yeah. Okay. So I think that really left me very disheartened because having your own brand, you don't like, I think Sophia mentioned it as well.

You don't [00:52:00] any money yourself, the longest you don't time. Yeah. And I was still doing it like the unit economics. So it worked out because I just took some of my savings. I bought some desktop fabric and I made it through order. So I wasn't spending money on a fact here. I didn't have, you know, like stock lying around.

I literally made it through order because I didn't wanna, I wanted to be sustainable about it as well, but that just got stressful and I wasn't making enough to support myself, whatever I made. I just put back it mm-hmm so it wasn't a failure, but it just, I was like, what's the point? Like, I'm just.

Driving myself insane. And I'm not even making money. Yeah. It's very fascinating. Yeah. So that's when my confidence sort of plummeted. And then I, I don't really like Instagram and, you know, just having to promote it on

Instagram and oh, how is it looking? I was starving myself so I could model my own stuff and I was just Julia unhappy and, oh, terrible.

I didn't even know. I didn't even know that, you know, freelancing was an option because no one ever talked about it till you came along. Yeah. So it was [00:53:00] always seen as this thing that people do before they can get an actual job. And it really isn't, it's just so much, you know, you. You have the independence of having your own thing, but the overhead cost isn't the same as the running a business, you know, you're not, there's barely any overhead costs unless you sort of count, um, stuff like software or whatever.

Yeah. So you're selling a service, not, not a product. Yeah. I think I'm just better geared towards that. Yeah.

[00:53:30] **Heidi:** Okay. So China boosted your confidence, your own brand. It kind of declined. And then like what happened when it came to like working with your first freelance client? Like how did you feel about that?

And at what point did, did that moment happen where you were like, once I started doing the thing I realized, I knew more than I. .

[00:53:56] **Aashika:** So my first encounter was horrible because there was this [00:54:00] girl who, um, wanted a tech back and she didn't wanna pay that much. And she pretty much wanted me to design stuff and make the tech back.

And I was literally charging \$25 an hour. And, um, or she was like, oh, you should check market shoes. People in India don't charge that much people with even more experience than you don't charge it. I said, look, I've been very, where was she located? She was based in India. She was also in India. and yeah, and I was like, look, to be very honest, I've been very honest about my race.

This is what I charge people. And, uh, it's fine if you can't afford it, that's okay. But you know, you don't get to decide my work. I think that's when I got angry and uh, the second client, I made sure that he paid me a quarter of the money in a Bronx. And then I would give him a quarter of the work and then keep like, it was a quarterly.

But then, you know, after. First quarter came in. He saw the stuff, he liked it, but he wasn't, he didn't, I think he didn't know what he wanted and he was very vague. So you do need [00:55:00] to find a client that knows what they want and they say yes or no. So then he then tried to sort of haggle it down and I hadn't actually put a contract in place.

So that's what everything on email would be, you know, but I do think there is some value in putting together a space contract template. Mm-hmm so, you know, otherwise, and I was meandering. And then after the second one, I decided to take your horse. Um, because I just, by that time, I had spoken to Laurie and I'd spoken to Sophia and I was like, you know, I can't do this brand or at least I need to put it on fourth for a bit because it's making miserable.

And I just took the call to, to sort of do fast and immediately. Um, as soon as I, I mean, I sent out, maybe I sent out proposals for about a month and then something came through and then more than actually actively sending out stuff. I now knew how to deal with it when people approached me, mm-hmm, you know, I sort of learned how to package my services in a more [00:56:00] professional manner.

I learned how to listen to the client and understand what they wanted. It's always about them. Mm-hmm and so I can and be this person that solves their problems. Yeah. So, yeah, I think that was the most important sort of listen to them rather than going me, me, me, I, I, I, I can do this. I can do that. Yeah. I made it all about them.

Yeah.

[00:56:22] **Heidi:** So, okay. So sounds like you had, like you said, you had couple rough experiences with those first clients you decided to enroll in. I know you said the community was really helpful in terms of like, helping you feel like, yeah, it's a pretty amazing group of people. Like I, I'm not active in the community.

It's very much a student community, but I, I get in there like once every few months and I just poke around and look at what's going on and it's some, I like get chills. It's so cool. Some of the stuff that's happening in there. Um, so, you know, I guess a little bit of it was just like getting out there and like [00:57:00] having those couple projects that didn't go great, which is just part of being a freelancer.

Like you're gonna go through that. Yeah. Right. It's a Rite of passage. All of this stuff is mm-hmm and then getting some support from other people through the vast community, et cetera, is just, has kind of naturally built. Um, are you feeling like pretty comfortable with where you're at?

[00:57:22] **Aashika:** I think, yeah, definitely I'm feeling and you know, the best part about being a freelancer is even if something doesn't work out, I now have a system where I just get back to it the next day.

Yeah. Send out 10 more proposals and it's a numbers game, to be honest, it is totally an and now I'm sort of very, I'm very actively. And like you said, sometimes it's just sewing the seat. Like the opportunity I got today was just another freelancer I connected with. We had a great conversation. We talked about potentially collaborating and she just referenced the sky to me.

And it was just really nice of her to do that. Yeah. And

[00:57:54] **Heidi:** you know, that's how your business is just grows on autopilot.

[00:57:59] **Aashika:** [00:58:00] So I think now I'm probably getting a better idea of what exactly my job is, which is something, you know, like I sort of see myself as a larger day consult, you know, so yeah.

[00:58:14] **Heidi:** That's amazing.

So much growth you've had, I mean, In the last, what it sounds like, like six months, a tremendous amount. I'm so excited for your future is huge. thank you. I mean, it's huge where you're at right now, but it's just, I know it's so much bigger than this too.

[00:58:38] **Aashika:** I mean, thank you so much for giving us the confidence to actually demand steps, like prices as well.

I, yeah, just never occurred to me. Like I just, I was always told if you do fashion, if you love it, but you're not gonna get saved that much. And I was okay with that till I wasn't. And you know, now I think it's, and the more people [00:59:00] do that, I think the better it will make the industry, you know, it really will push back about for

[00:59:05] **Heidi:** sure.

Particular things. Yeah, for sure. I totally agree. I totally agree. Um, well, congrats on having the. assertiveness to actually do that. Cause it's one thing to like, listen to me, tell you to do that, but then to actually do it and hold your ground, it can be a little tough. Like you said, some clients beat you down and that can feel hard that can like push you into like a, a, you know, yeah.

A downward fall. And you're just like, oh, okay. I guess I just gotta lower my rates. I tell people all the time, that's fine. If they want it for \$10 or \$5 an hour or 25 or whatever, if you're 35 or if you're 55, whatever number, that's fine. If they want it for that, they're just not your client. You're just not their freelancing.

Exactly. And that's fine. And that's fine. Not everybody's your client. Um, very cool. I would love to know, like, could you just [01:00:00] walk us through the, a day in the life of a fashion freelancer, such as yourself, what's the day, your average day look like.

[01:00:08] **Aashika:** my average day. So I actually work best really early in the morning.

Okay. So if I have like an ongoing project, I get up at maybe six or seven. Okay. And I get some of that work done for, you know, everyone else's up. Um, if I don't have a project, I sort of, maybe in the morning, nine to 10 shift, send out a proposal. Okay. And another thing I like to do is I do constantly like to upscale and that's why I like freelancing because there's always so much more to learn.

So I. Once in a while, I will sort of, you know, try to learn a new skill. Like I'm trying to learn more about the print design now, because a lot of it, there's a lot of stuff in common with, you know, lace design or, um, so yeah, my morning is normally sending out emails. If I have a project I do get up early and I like to get that done.

So I wrap off my day by like 4 35. Yeah. [01:01:00] And, um, it's like a really intense project I do sometimes I just enjoy the work so much. I lose track of time and I do Workday. Yeah. But I mean, I love what I do. So that's your choice. It makes me happy and uh, yeah. Yeah, that's amazing. But I do like that. I can, you know, choose blocks of time when I work in blocks of time when I, you know, step out to get inspiration or, you know?

[01:01:24] **Heidi:** Yeah. Yeah. That's amazing. Um, alright. I, well, first of all, where can everybody connect with you online? so I

[01:01:34] **Aashika:** am sort of gonna make a separate Instagram for work, but for now people can find me at my current handle, which is decadent bra. Okay. That's the name of, what's the name of my brand. Uh, but yeah, it's my instant handle decadent brat.

Okay. Um, and, um, LinkedIn would actually be the best way to find any cause I'm quite

[01:01:55] **Heidi:** active on there. Okay. We will link to both of those in the show notes. So, um, you don't have to worry about trying to [01:02:00] spell the handle or anything like that, LinkedIn. Yeah. Um, cool. And then I would love to wrap up by asking you the question.

I ask everybody at the end of the show, and that is what is one thing people never ask you about being a fashion freelancer that you wish they would.

[01:02:15] **Aashika:** I think the fact that, um, it's possible and it's a very fulfilling, um, choice. Yeah. And there is a happy medium between working for somebody else and running your own brand, which would be running, um, your services as, as a prolong.

So, yeah. So I think that's, that's something I wish, I knew least. Yeah.

[01:02:40] **Heidi:** And I don't, yeah, it's, it's a little bit of a Conor I'm like, I'm not sure how to get the word out there more because it is so possible, but there's really nobody else talking about it. Um, .

[01:02:53] **Aashika:** And I think the fact that this space is less cutthroat and competitive, because like I said earlier, it's all about how unique you [01:03:00] can make your skills set.

Mm-hmm which in this job market is the best thing you can do because you know, don't be better to be different, I think. Yeah. Yeah.

[01:03:09] **Heidi:** It's very true. It's very true. Ashika this was amazing to chat with you. I'm so excited. We got the opportunity to connect. Thank you so much for coming on the show and sharing your story, um, and journey with us.

Thank

[01:03:21] **Aashika:** you so much for having me and, um,

[01:03:26] **Heidi:** Thank you so much for listening and thank you so much for joining us. Ashika this conversation was really, really awesome. I really appreciate you sharing so transparently your journey to becoming a kick ass successful fashion freelancer. Um, thank you to those people on my team, behind the scenes who help make this show possible.

Brittany Daniel, Tara, my husband mark, who does the editing and tech, and is a lot of moving pieces and parts to a podcast. It would not be possible without all

of us behind the scenes. So thank you. And again, thank you to you for listening to you for listening. Um, if you're curious to learn more about [01:04:00] how you can kick out in your freelance career, like Ashaka.

Get on the wait list for freelance accelerator. It only opens a couple times a year head on over to so [heidi.com/fast](https://heidi.com/fast) F a SST will link that up in the show notes and get yourself in the wait list. In the meantime, you can also check out all my free resources at so [heidi.com/freelance](https://heidi.com/freelance) and yeah. Make sure you're subscribed wherever you're listening.

Um, I'm also fair, just random, but I just remembered, I always forget to say I'm moderately active on Instagram. So, uh, that's at so Heidi, so heading over there and say, hi, if you're enjoying the show, let me know. Um, feedback, ideas, inspiration, always welcome. I love hearing from you. So drop me a message in the DMS and yeah, that's it.

I hope you're having an awesome day. Whatever it is you are doing. Keep listening and I'll talk to you in the next episode. Bye.