

The Limitless Life Experience Podcast

The Convo About Rising Up To Shine With Sharn Khaira

Transcript

He's really helped me to blossom into who I really want to become. And I think he's always been supportive, which if I didn't have a supportive husband, I know you've spoken about this so many times Suzy, like it's just so difficult because you've got this like inner battle, you know, especially when you start, but then if you've got external factors, like a husband be really difficult. So now he's, he's totally on board. Welcome to the Limitless Life Experience podcast with me, your host, Suzy Ashworth. I'm a mum of three, seven-figure, serial entrepreneur, Hay House author, international keynote speaker, quantum transformation and embodiment coach, and believer in miracles. My superpower is helping female entrepreneurs like you create six-figure breakthroughs in your business fast, so that you can expand into limitless living and create an incredibly positive difference in the world. In this space you will hear me talk all about wealth, yourself, spirit, and impact. This is The Limitless Life Experience podcast.

Suzy: Hello? You gorgeous human being, it is Suzy Ashworth here, and you are listening to the Limitless Life Experience podcast. And I have got a treat for you today. Yes, I am so excited to welcome to you, my fabulous listeners, the incredible Sharn Khaira, who is the founder of the Asian Female Entrepreneur Collective. She is a former client and all around badass. And when we were thinking about what it was that we wanted to talk about today, there were so many things. It was like, oh my goodness, we just need to not even plan. We're just going to talk and see what comes up because there were so many things that I would love for her to be able to share with you today. So Sharn, thank you so much for being a guest.

Sharn: And thank you so much for having me.

Suzy: You are so, so welcome. So I would love for us to just start at the beginning, actually. Can you share your story from like, let's go all of the way back.

Sharn: Yeah. So are you saying sort of business or, you know, you know, my story from growing up, oh my God yeah?

Suzy: Yeah. From growing up.

Sharn: Yeah. So, um, I'm of course I'm Asian, so Indian. So I was, um, born in the UK, um, and I was actually born, I wasn't meant to be born, which sounds insane. Um, my parents were told that they would never have children and they had me after ten years, which was obviously incredible. Um, so my parents were from India and we lived on literally the

roughest streets in my hometown. So they were factory workers, both of them, like back in the day. So as I was growing up, um, I was obviously, you know, surrounded by a lot of, you know, bad things, I guess. So, you know, the street I lived on, like, I like normally saw like prostitutes in the evening and, um, my parents were working late. Like I remember my mum working like three jobs to make ends meet. Um, my brother was born with learning difficulties, so he actually went to a special needs school when he was younger. Um, and there was like a lot of pressure put on me from a really young age because my parents couldn't speak English because, you know, I had a brother who, you know, like historically in the Indian culture, like the boys meant to be like, you know, culturally he's male and they play so much importance on a male or a boy or a son, but that responsibility fell on me really early on. And I remember actually, I think I've spoken to you about this Suzy before, but I remember like going to parents evening with my mum and I must have been about, I think I was about six years old. My dad couldn't attend, so me and my mum went and obviously it was when, uh, they broke the news to my mum that my brother had learning difficulties. And like, he obviously wasn't picking things up, um, you know, in school, so he would have to go to a different school. And I remember like translating it to her in Punjabi when I was like six years old, which was so insane. Um, and then I guess from there onwards, like when we around 13, we did move out of that area. So luckily my parents bought, you know, a property on the outskirts of our hometown, which was amazing. And I think from seeing my mum and dad struggle so much when we were younger and then also seeing that my dad's, so basically my dad's got two brothers and a sister, so my, all of my aunties and uncles were millionaires. Um, and I don't say that lightly, they were. And I think I decided like from a really young age, like I looked at my parents and I looked at like my auntie and my cousins. I was just like, I'm not going to be like my mum and dad when I'm older. Um, so I decided actually a really young age that I was going to go to university. Then obviously I went to college and uni. Um, and then I graduated around 10 years ago. And then, um, my first job out of uni, I was bullied severely. Um, so this was like 10 years ago. And there was def- now I'm realising actually that was definitely racism, and actually 10 years ago was my first experience with anxiety and mental health. Um, but back then, no one was talking about anxieties. I remember when my doctor said to me you've got anxiety. I was like, what is that? Like, I don't understand what you're talking about. Um, so after that then, um, so I graduated, I think it was like around 2010. So I stuck it out in full-time corporate for about five, four, four years. So just various different online marketing roles. So my background is actually online marketing, which actually set me up so well for, you know, an online and offline business. Um, and then I just literally decided Suz, like I was like, I can not work for someone else. Like my freedom was so restricted, I know you, one of your biggest core values is freedom. Um, but my freedom was like, you know, someone was deciding when my holidays would be, someone was deciding when I would take lunch, someone was deciding, you know, someone else was deciding if I was worthy of a promotion. And it was just, I literally decided back in 2014, I think I was trying to plan my wedding and I just had no time. And I was so stressed out at my corporate job some days I would forget to eat. And like, I'm a huge foodie. So that says everything.

Suzy: That was the final straw.

Sharn: That was the final straw. And then literally it was like a lunch hour and I decided, you know, this is it. I'm going to write out my notice and give it to my account director. And I was in, I remember being in this like really difficult situation because my wedding was coming up

the following year. And basically I'm sponsoring some of my cousins to come over from India to attend the wedding. But that sponsorship depended on consistent payslip. And obviously like you've got to obviously show like you're earning and all of those things. And I was like, I remember thinking, oh my God, if I handed my notice, my cousins might not get a visa for my wedding. And I was just like, you know what? It was one of those moments where I was like, I'm choosing faith here, like, I'm just gonna, I'm just gonna go with the flow and just know that the universe is going to support me and they're going to get their visa and I can quit this job. And so I did back in 2014.

Suzy: There is so much juicy stuff there. I am curious, what was it like as a six-year old, like translating for your parents? Did you know what it was? Did you understand what it was that you were saying to your mum at that parents' evening?

Sharn: I think if I look back now and I do often compare myself actually to younger children, I think I realised from a really, really young age that I would, I would be supporting my mum and dad. And I think, like I remember, like when I was five years old and like ringing up Sky, um, to basically install Sky at our house. And I, I think I definitely realised like when I was translating, like I knew that my brother was different and I knew that it would ha- like so I remember like my mum crying. And even now when I speak about it brings up so much emotion. But I remember like, I do remember what it was like, and I do, I, I was fully, which is really weird actually, because such a young age, I was fully aware of what was going on. So yeah, like I was completely aware that I would have to support them. And I think even more so, because I was like, we were like crap, like my brother he's got learning difficulties. So I knew that I would need to step up.

Suzy: It sounds like, cause when you think about your childhood, do you feel like you had a good childhood in that kind of traditional sense that you were able to play and have fun? Cause it sounds like there was a lot on your shoulders from a really early age.

Sharn: Yeah. So my parents were really strict, so I was the only girl on my dad's side of the family, so, oh my God, my cousins were boys. So, um, because I think I was born a bit later. My mum and dad, well especially my mum, she was really strict on me. So actually we weren't allowed, like, especially me, I wasn't allowed to literally do anything. So I wasn't allowed to cut my hair. I wasn't allowed to wear makeup before I'd married. I wasn't allowed to wear like sleeveless dresses. Um, I wasn't allowed to go to my, go to town with like my friends. I wasn't allowed to go for sleepovers. I wasn't allowed to have friends over. So from a really young age, like I would say, like, we had a good childhood in terms of like, you know, my mum and dad did, you know, try and give us everything, like from a kind of materialistic perspective. But if I look back and I remember like, you know, it was, it was a little bit boring because we weren't allowed to do anything. And I became very aware of really young age that I was like different. You know, when I'd go to school, I looked obviously different. I had a different name, like my full name is Gulsharn, like everyone calls me Sharn, but it was, and I, I just was very aware that I was super, super, super different. And I think my zest for freedom and for living a different life and having a life that is full of, you know, rich experiences, came from knowing when I was younger, that this can't just be my life, you know? Cause my, my mum and dad, if they had it their own way, I would never have been able to go to university or traveling at 18. So I had to like later on in life really rebel.

Suzy: So how did you broach that with your family? Obviously they sound very traditional from an Indian cultural perspective. How did you manage to go to university and how did you get “permission” in inverted commas to go traveling?

Sharn: So when I was around 15 and obviously if you, if you think about it right up until the age of 15, I've been like, I wasn't allowed to do anything. Cause like literally, and I was just, I was looking at my cousins and they were a bit older and I remember like one of my cousins was really well-traveled and um, I went to see him and he was probably about 10, 12 years older than me. I remember like him showing me like his traveling pictures. Like he'd been to Bali, he'd been to Thailand. And I was just thinking like, this is what I want to do. Like I really want to travel. And I think I decided at like 16, at 18 I was going to travel, so after college I was going to go traveling. And what started happening was I just started having the really difficult conversations with my mum at like 15 and saying to her, I'm going to go out. Like, I'm going out tonight with my, with my friends or I'm going to go to my friends and have like a sleepover. And there was like a lot of like resistance and a lot of like arguments. It was not pretty, you know, my mum bless her. Like I love her and we have a great relationship, but you know, she was really hard on me. And I think, Suz, I just had to just keep persevering and just, just keep telling them like, this is what I'm doing. I'm really sorry, this upsets you I'm really sorry, this makes you sad, but this is how it's going to go down. And I remember like there was so much shame attached to me going, traveling. So I think one of the times my mum was like, didn't speak to me for like six months. Um, you know, I'd sent everyone like postcards and like, you know, they weren't like answering my calls and there was just so much shame attached to like me going, traveling, like I remember when my uncles names, my mum and dad, like, why are you sending her? Like, she's going to be on her own, like, you know, this is really bad. And there was just so much shame to attach, to being different. But I think back then, the key thing for me was just to keep having those tough conversations with my mum. And sometimes that would result in like days of not speaking to each other, but it's not like how it is now. I think back then, because no one, you know, it's really different now I look at like, you know, the younger generation, they can go, just go traveling, but back then we didn't really have that choice. And I think sometimes, but then like there was no other choice other than to have really heated arguments or debates or sometimes not speak to each other. And I think that was really the only way back then.

Suzy: This is so surprising to hear this, because I know that as an individual, if you have to deal with confrontation, you will, but it's not like your natural personality trait. And so to hear that you at 15 were prepared, there was just something innately, intrinsically within you that knew that you had to take a stand for yourself is well, one, it makes it just hearing your story in this level of detail, it's so obvious why you are doing what you're doing now for the Asian female community. But yeah, hearing you taking a stand at 15, I think that that is really brave and really courageous. And I'm like, when you said that there was so much shame involved in going traveling, like literally my mouth dropped open that I was just like, could not comprehend. So you mentioned your uncle didn't speak to you for six months. And I'm just wondering, was there much of an Indian community around where you lived related to you or were you quite isolated? Because I know that you said at school, you were obviously very different, but I'm just wondering about the pressure of the culture immediately outside of your parents.

Sharn: That's such an interesting question. So yeah, we had, we've got a really big like Indian community where I used to live and I think my parents, you know, it's, it's just the, Indian cultural conditioning it's like on autopilot. What, what will people think? What will people think? And even my mum now, you know, so many of her decisions and her thoughts and her thought process is just determined by literally one of the first things is what will people think. Um, and I think that was like a huge thing back then as well, because I don't, I mean, I didn't know anyone in my circle or immediate circle or extended circle at that time that had gone traveling, you know, with, uh, with a white, British friend. And so it was like such a huge deal. And I just remember just people just, I guess, just judging me for going. And it was just this really shameful thing, but I was like, I don't care what you think, I'm going.

Suzy: Do you think that you have escaped that fear of wondering what other people think or does it just manifest itself for you in other ways?

Sharn: So I think now, um, I really don't care what people think from our extended perspective. So, you know, if I think about, I remember when I first started my business, I was really scared to post on social media because I was scared of what my cousins would think. I was scared of like what, you know, my hometown community would think that I think as we know, you know, um, there is a direct correlation between visibility and sales. So I'm now at a point where I didn't care about those people, but I think sometimes like, you know, like for so many of us, um, there are parts of me that I haven't fully revealed, which I'm really stepping into. Um, and I do definitely think it manifests itself in business because it's a, it's a cultural, cultural thing, cultural conditioning, I guess that I'm so used to.

Suzy: I am wondering, you mentioned him, like when you were talking about planning the wedding, but you are obviously a very modern 21st century Asian. I don't really, I was going to say Asian babe, but Asian woman. And I am just wondering your husband obviously accepts you and obviously is inspired by you and loves you, otherwise you wouldn't have got married in the first place, but he, how progressive is he? Like, does he ever, do you ever find yourself in this cultural conversation with him or are you totally on the same page when it comes to you creating and defining a whole new set of rules for the way that you live life and business?

Sharn: That is such a great question Suzy, and I think this will re- I think this will really resonate with a lot of people. So my husband Dav he is super ambitious. He's, he's kind of like a rule breaker in his family as well. So, you know, all of his family work in the family businesses, he was the one who went off on his own, has created his own path. And we've, we've been married, it was five years this year, and we've had this beautiful journey, like where, you know, we used to live in Canada as well. So we moved back last year. He actually is super supportive. And I actually, sometimes I think back and I think could I have potentially created such a big business if I hadn't had his support and I'm not sure because when we got married in 2015, so we got married in the May and by September, I'd launched my luxury Asian wedding planning business. And I think he gave me the confidence that like my family never gave me, um, to be myself, to express myself, to, you know, be authentic and show up as who I truly am. And I mean, sometimes now he's like, why are you putting content where you're sharing such private stuff, but in general, he's like so supportive. And you know, we really, cause sometimes he works really long hours, you know, we've spent

like sometimes you have to work in Canada. I was planning weddings in the UK. And we had, like, I remember there was a stint, we had six weeks apart. So we, we do, we are really supportive of each other's paths and journeys. Um, and he is, I probably would say he is so progressive and, you know, from an Asian man, like I hate to stereotype, but traditionally they are controlling. They are sexist. They do want the woman to be in the kitchen or like washing their clothes. So he is definitely not like that. And I think that he's really helped me to blossom into who I really want to become. And I think he's always been supportive, which I think if I didn't have a supportive husband, I know you've spoken about this so many times Suzy, like it's just so difficult because you've got this like, first of all we've always got an inner battle, you know, especially when you start, but then if you've got external factors like a husband or, you know, like a family member or a partner or boyfriend or girlfriend or whatever it is, it must, it must be really difficult. So no, he's, he's totally on board, totally on board.

Suzy: Have you got clients that do have unsupportive partners, family members, friends, um, and they are still able to rock it? And if so, what is required in order for you to bypass the negativity or the disbelief and still go for it anyway?

Sharn: pSo I think I have a real mix of clients. So some of the Asian women I work with, their partners aren't supportive at all and some, some are really supportive. And what I will say is that I think it really comes down to, we know what you've got to be so connected to your mission and your vision and the dream life you, you want to create. Because I remember like when I started, like, although dad was super supportive, he was a bit like if this doesn't work within like five months, you might need to get a job. And that was like, I was like, oh my God, like, there's no way I'm going back to like, full-time work working for someone else. And I think the women that I work with whose partners or husbands aren't supportive, I always encourage them to again, have those difficult conversations. It is about having those really hard conversations, sitting people down and expressing yourself, you know, and putting across your viewpoint. And then it's kind of like I know this sounds really, uh, direct, but it's it's are they on board or are they not? You know, ok if they're on board brilliant, amazing. But if they're not on board, then what are you going to, you know, the questions you need to be asking yourself is how are you going to get past that and how you're going to get through that? Does that look like, for example, them not asking you how it's going or them just, you just not bringing up the subject of your business or your work, or does it look like them, I don't know, checking in every few weeks, I think it really depends on each individual. And I think that sometimes people just don't understand though, you know? Um, but what I will say is, you know, when, when I first started and dad was like, hmm, if this isn't working, you need to get like a full-time job. Um, I think when you do the work that's required, whether that's the strategy or the mindset work, and then they see you becoming successful, then it's like, as you probably know, Suz it so much easier.

Suzy: Yeah, I do know, and I have lived it and I've certainly supported clients too. And I think one of my favourite questions, so often during a sales call, when you are talking to people about what might hold them back, or what's stopping them from taking the next step, often it's that fear you can, they'll either say it explicitly, or you can just feel the fear of them having to tell their partner that they've decided to invest in X, Y, and Z. And one of my favorite questions after somebody has a launch after they have sold their first high ticket packages, what did your partner say? What did you have to say? And it's that level of satisfaction of

knowing that you've chosen to believe in yourself, I believe in you, and now you've got the evidence so that if there was any doubt in their mind, they now can see the tangible hard evidence that they have to get on board and believe in you because you are doing it. And that is, I think it's often more satisfying for me than it is for my clients.

Sharn: And I think sometimes Suz, it's like, you know, I think we wrote an e-mail campaign about this, but, you know, are you asking your husband for permission to live your life, and your dreams? And I think that, you know, some, I think it's okay. Sometimes we put as women, we put our, put so much pressure on ourselves. Like, oh, they're not, you know, they're not going to get it. And it's going to be so difficult. And, but sometimes there is like that and it's okay for it to be like that, you know, releasing that expectation that they have to be 1000000% on board, um, makes things easier as well. I, I think. And sometimes I think sometimes it's like, just be, just know and be empowered by yourself and your vision that you, and I'm not saying, you know, you should keep secrets from your partners or your husbands, but, you know, even now, like he probably doesn't know every investment that I'm making into my business. He doesn't know every single detail. And I'm cool with that. And he's cool with that. So it's not, it really depends on what your relationship's like, I think. And how much, how much you do want to also share as well. I, I don't think he knew, um, when I was working with you or like, you know, I don't think he knew your fees. And I was like, no, it's cool because I know I'm going to do it. So it's fine.

Sharn: I think what I always say about my dreamboat clients is that they might consult with their partners, but they're not asking for permission. And there's a real big difference between saying I've spoken to somebody, this is the programme and this is what I want to go forward with, and I wanted to let you know, because you're important to me, but I'm not asking your permission if I can move forward with it. And for me, that is really important because I know that the difference between somebody who is a success in their business and somebody who isn't is somebody who can make decisions. And usually it's somebody who can make decisions quickly. And so if you're like, I need to think about it for a week and I need to consult with my partner, my mum, my dad, my auntie, my cousin. I need to speak to that person. I'm not, I know that you're not ready for the level of commitment to yourself and your intuition and your gut feeling that is required in order to, one, work with me, but two, I really believe I talk a lot about my mentors and my peers, multiple seven-figure, eight-figure entrepreneurs, your intuition matters and counts. So no matter what strategy, blueprint, template you have been given, you need to be able to play around with that. And intuitively say, I'm going to go for this. I'm going to go for that. I'm going to take that out. I'm going to add this in. And if you can't do that on the call with me, if you, if you don't have that feeling, you don't have that knowing then it's not the right time for me and my clients.

Sharn: Absolutely, absolutely. 100% agree. And I think indecisiveness will sometimes kill your business. You know, so many times when we sit on things that we just don't decide. And I think, you know, from, from my perspective as well, like I just think as an Asian woman, like, I, I think the only person that I've probably ever consulted in things is dad. Like no one else, you know, and I think you have to have, you have to feel comfortable in your own skin to know that you are also making the right choices and right decisions and empower yourself rather than relying on validation from someone else, for sure.

Suzy: Talk to me about AFEC and your mission and vision has evolved over time, and I see it and feel it within your messaging, it's got stronger and stronger. When you first came up with the concept, was it as strongly rooted in breaking, um, cultural stereotypes down for women as what it is now?

Sharn: So for everyone that probably doesn't know, I started out as a luxury Asian wedding planner. So I had a wedding blog, which I was blogging up until my wedding. Um, my blog was getting thousands of unique visitors per month. It was a super successful blog. It's ranked number one in Google. I think it might still be if you type an Asian wedding blog and, um, four months after launching, like what, getting married, sorry. I obviously launched my luxury Asian wedding planning business. And it started to do really well really quickly. Like, you know, within 18 months I was planning destination weddings. I was signing off big budget weddings, so budgets over 100k, my work was in leading global magazines and blogs. I was on the BBC Breakfast Show, um, you know, being positioned as an Asian wedding expert. So everything was going super, super well. Um, and in, I think it was March, 2017, I decided to just set up, uh, Asia, uh, female Asian entrepreneur group. Um, so I was just kind of thinking, okay, like there's a lot of groups out there, but there isn't anything for Asian female entrepreneurs. Um, and obviously our challenges are completely different. Our mindset, um, challenges are different. So I was like, I'm just going to set this up. And really honestly, like, it was just really a way to collaborate and network and just, um, get my wedding planning brand out there more. And I've always been really passionate about, you know, um, you know, global issues and local issues. That's, that's always been me. Um, but what, I don't think I set it up as something that I'm going to have this big mission, and this is going to be a movement and I'm going to help Asian female entrepreneurs. It wasn't like that actually. And how it evolved was, um, I think like three months into setting the group up, um, I launched like a workshop. Like it was a one day workshop. We were going to cover things like business, social media mindset and productivity. And what happened was literally those tickets like practically sold out, like instantly, like, you know, it was really, really crazy, like 20 tickets, like within a few weeks, like sold out or maybe in a week I think. And then it was like that feedback I started getting from that first workshop back in June 2017, um, you know, people were saying, oh my God, like I did this, I handed in my notice, I opened my salon. Like the results were incredible. And then I literally decided from that moment on like, oh my God, like, I love doing this. Like, I think I love this more than weddings. Um, and then it really evolved. I think when we started working together in 2018, I think it was 2018. I just started getting more and more passionate about, you know, the, the, the taboo subjects, I guess. Um, you know, like how it aff- those taboo subjects such as bullying, sexism, um, you know, fertility issues, all of those things affect us as an Asian female entrepreneur community. So I think my messaging has like evolved over the years and now, again, it's evolving. Like, I feel like it's going deeper and deeper into mindset. So I definitely think it's been, you know, it's been a bit, it's been a journey I think yeah.

Suzy: As it always is, and I wonder, can we go back to the beginning with the, um, Asian wedding planning business luxury? Asian wedding planning? What, what was it that made you think this is an opportunity?

Sharn: So I think it's, it's such a cliché, isn't it? Like? I think I, because I ha- we had we had a really big wedding, um, you know, typical Asian wedding went on for a few days, 700 people at our wedding at Cheltenham Racecourse.

Suzy: Wow, wow. That's crazy.

Yeah, it had 700 people. It was at Cheltenham Racecourse. And it spanned like three days. Right. It was, I mean, it was nuts. Um, I had practically planned the whole thing and it like, it was incredible if anyone wants to see the images, like they can just, you know, have a little, just Google Desi Bright Dreams, they're on the website. Um, but I think it was, I'd always been really interested in weddings. Like I do adore weddings. I love the creativity side of that. And I loved creating like slick, beautiful, stunning events, you know, like really beautiful events. And I think it was that thing of, oh, I'm really good at this. Oh, I've got a real good eye for detail. I'm really excellent at customer experience. Um, I'm really detailed, organised. It was all of those traits, which I guess led me to believe that I would be really, and obviously I wanted to own my own business, right. Like I hated corporate. So I think that was originally where that thinking came from. And obviously everyone was encouraging me. They were like, oh my God, like, you should really do this. And you're really good at it. And you're really amazing. And you've got the skill and the capabilities, um, and it's obviously really stressful, right. High pressure. So only I feel like only a certain person can do it. It's not for everyone. Um, so that's where that came from originally back in sort of 2015.

Suzy: And you said it was high pressure. And I remember the transition actually from really taking that step of releasing Desi Bride Dreams as your main source of income and choosing to go all in on AFEC. That was a real process for you. What was the most challenging thing about saying I'm going to go all in on the Asian Female Entrepreneur Collective?

Sharn: So I think it was, I remember, like I got back from Italy and we'd done this incredible wedding and it was amazing. I was getting all of the inquiries, but something just wasn't sitting right with me. And I just thought it was a bit of a phase. I was like, okay, like, it's going to go, like, it's fine. I'm just a bit burnt out, you know? Um, but obviously it didn't go and it lasted like six months. I was like, we have a problem here. Um, and I think when I decided, so it was last January, January 2019. I decided that actually, you know what, I'm just not passionate about the Asian weddings anymore. I need to let it go. I think the most challenging thing again, surprise, surprise, it was a judgment and shame. So my immediate thoughts were, oh my God, are people going to think I had like my business failed? Like, are they going to think my wedding planning company wasn't successful? Are they going to think I'm just, you know, I can't make up my mind and I'm fretting between things and businesses, um, those were the, I think it was, it was just really clearly judgment. I was just too concerned with what other people would think. Other people in the industry, you know, extended family, um, audiences. I was just obviously consumed by that, but I was like, you know what? It doesn't need to be because in my head I was thinking, Oh, it needs to be this big announcement. I need to announce it and tell everyone and you know, like just make a big thing out of it. And I was like, actually, I don't need to do that. Like, no one really needs to know. Um, so I think that was the, like, I think it was also releasing an identity. So it was like, I had obviously created this identity, like luxury Asian wedding planner. Like everyone knew me, you know, AFEC came I guess through Desi Bright Dreams. And everyone knew me. I was so closely associated to the Asian wedding industry in the UK. Um, and I guess a big part of it was losing that identity. Like, oh my God, who am I without the weddings? That was it. Yeah.

Suzy: Do you, I mean, obviously you don't have any regrets. What was the biggest shift that you noticed after you stopped focusing on that and put your attention on AFEC, what was the biggest like, wow, oh my goodness. Look at what's, look at what's going on here.

Sharn: Yeah. So AFEC, um, started doing incredible things. Like I'd put out a mastermind, we'd have like, you know, some really big, like I remember like last year we had two 40k launches, which was amazing and the results were insane. Like the results really was what was just really lighting me up. Um, just seeing Asian female entrepreneurs, like making more impact and more income in their business was just incredible. Like it, as you know Suz like, being a coach and a mentor it's, it's like so special. Um, but I think I really realised like last year, like this, especially when we did our event in London, so we did a huge event in London last year. I mean, it was like, I think it was like 55, 60 women, you know, Canary Wharf. It was amazing. And I think, um, that there is something special about being in community with, you know, women from your own culture, because you really understand each others' barriers, each others' cultural blocks, um, and challenges. And I think last year I realised like, oh my God, like this has the potential to be something so big. And there's obviously nothing out there like it. So I think I really realized last year, like it is, whereas with weddings, you have a cap there's only a certain amount of weddings you can do a year. Of course you can, you know, diversify into online trainings and all of those things. But I think with something like AFEC or any kind of, you know, mission driven online business, like your potential is limitless, I think.

Suzy: And let's talk about the mission and I love the fact that it has evolved. I think that often it's easy to look at somebody's end result or where they are now and think, Oh my God, I can never speak that eloquently or be that passionate about my thing. And I always say with my own story, I just wanted to get out of my corporate. I just thought I'd be a hypnotherapist. I didn't think that I'd be talking about activating a million women and X, Y, and Z when I first started. So I love the fact that the intention actually with AFEC has grown so much. So yeah. Tell us about the mission.

Sharn: Yeah. So the mission really is to empower Asian female entrepreneurs globally, um, by giving them the mindset and the marketing tools to change their life and their business. And that's something that I'm so, so passionate about having seen my own transformation, um, from, you know, from like, from my story that you heard, you know, other Asian female entrepreneurs we've helped through the AFEC brand, you know, that mission, we want it to, we want it to be global. You know, we're already getting international clients, which is so amazing, um, into our programmes, but we want it to be something that, you know, whether you come into the membership or you come into the mastermind or you come into one-to-one mentoring, we want to be able to give you the tools to really elevate your life, but make it tailored. So it's tailored towards that Asian woman mindset, because we do have so many different layers when it comes to judgment when it comes to shame when it comes to cultural blocks, um, and especially going into 2021, um, there's going to be a big shift towards mindset and cultural blocks and barriers. Um, so we want to really reach as many Asian women globally as we possibly can.

Suzy: When you think about 2020, and what has happened this year, how do you think that it has impacted the Asian culture? And I suppose I'm asking that question through the lens of Black Lives Matter.

Sharn: Hmm. I think that, I mean, as me and you both know, like Black Lives Matter has been something that we've had these conversations, like God, like, you know, for the last few years really. Um, and obviously it was more highlighted, I would say globally and definitely in the global coaching industry, uh, after, you know, George, George Floyd in June, I think it was. Um, I think that Asian women are, like, we've always known that obviously we are a minority, right? So I mean, most of the podcasts I go onto, or most of, you know, events I've spoken out or, you know, um, trainings that I do in groups, like I'm normally the only Asian woman or Indian woman. Um, but I think that in terms of the pandemic this year, um, and obviously Black Lives Matters, I think that we are, it's obviously a great time for us to step up, um, and to be seen, to be heard. But I also think that, you know, the world is now realising it as well in terms of, you know, there should be spaces made for obviously black women, um, but also other, other women of colour as well, whether you're Chinese, whether you're Asian, whether you're Indian, you know, so I think that this year, what we've really realised is that, you know, we really, we really can step into who we want to be and that now the lens is really on women of colour. And I, you know, I'm the, I'm like the forever optimist. Um, so I just, I just personally feel like it's a really great time for us, you know, and obviously there's racism is alive and kicking. I mean, you only really need to look at the US presidential election that's happening in America right now. Um, to know that, but I do believe that, you know, this year, women of colour are really stepping up. And I think we have such a big opportunity for ourselves to really step into our true power.

Suzy: I 100% agree. And when you think about what is possible for Asian women, culturally, cause it's interesting, I'm just thinking about what you said at the beginning where, you know, when you went traveling, it was a new thing. Like people weren't doing that, women weren't doing that. And now it's super common. When you think about where you would love the movement to be in five years' time, what types of things do you want to be able to say, oh, when you think back to 2020, nobody was doing that, and now this is normal. Like what are the things that you would really love to see change over the next five years?

Sharn: So I'd love to see more global leaders that are Asian. So if you think about, you know, I was researching masterminds a few months ago and I was thinking, okay, I want to be part of a mastermind that is potentially led by a seven-figure Asian female entrepreneur who has a big mission and vision, because it's not just about the numbers. You need someone who, who actually cares, um, who is actually passionate about mission is not just the numbers for them. Um, that's definitely, I know you really resonate with that Suz, and I know that I do as well, but I literally could not find anyone. I was like, this is insane. Like I literally can't, you know, there are obviously, um, you know, around the world globally, there are seven-figure Asian female entrepreneurs. Of course they are, but I would love to see more Asian female entrepreneurs globally, like on more stages on more TEDx talks, on more podcasts, in more membership sites, um, doing more expert trainings, leading events in places like London, New York, Paris, like I would love, cause I guess for me, like I just don't see, I don't see that many women that look like me in that kind of position, you know, and I, I really obviously aspire to be that for my community and my audience, but also I would love to see more women like that. And we just, we just really need to give everyone the tools and the power to really become that because we all have it within ourselves to be extraordinary. But I think sometimes Asian women don't break through because of the cultural BS that holds us back. Um, and I know that's happened with me. Like there's so many things I want

to share on Instagram and through my content this year, um, that sometimes like, you know, judgment has held me back. Um, so I, I think I really want to see it across the board. Um, you know, you know, like I said, like when it's filtered through to the, you know, like the groups, the podcast, the, the events, I would love to see it, you know, on that scale I think.

Suzy: I totally hear you. And I know for sure that when I first launched the Limitless Life live event, it was because I couldn't get on any stages, so like I wanted to speak on stage but I couldn't get on any. So I was like, okay, I want to build it myself. And then, uh, with my mastermind that I launched this year, I had the same feeling like I was looking for a female group that was like-minded. I wasn't necessarily looking for one, to be run by a woman of colour. And I have to say that with the States, there are a lot of incredible, um, black women leaders who we are seeing front and centre doing some incredible things. There's less of that in the UK. What I would really have loved is a UK-based mastermind, and that wasn't there. So, in the way that I wanted it, so I created it myself, but I really hear what you're saying. Sometimes we don't want to create it ourselves. Sometimes we want to join, um, join someone else's movement, but it's great to be amongst peers. It's great to be amongst like-minded people. And culturally, I really hear what you're saying, that it is, it's powerful. Like when you get all of your women together through AFEC that is powerful. And so, yeah, I hear you. And I hold that vision with you that by the time you revisit this podcast, we are saying, wow, look at how things have changed.

Sharn: Yes, definitely. That would be so, so, so incredible.

Suzy: Right. This has been such a beautiful conversation. I feel like this is the perfect place to end it. I would love for you to share where can my beautiful listeners find out more about you, Sharn?

Sharn: Yeah, so we've got a free, uh, Asian Female Entrepreneur Collective group, which you can find by just searching Asian Female Entrepreneur Collective. I'm also on Instagram, over at @asian_female_entrepreneur.

Suzy: Amazing. Thank you so much for joining us, Sharn, and I can't wait until the next time.

Sharn: Thank you so much for having me Suzy.

Thank you for listening, and if you loved this episode, you know the drill, give us a tag on Instagram to tell us what you loved about the episode, and if you haven't done so already go over and leave me a five star review on iTunes, and I will love you forever. And in the meantime, please remember that...

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