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Hi, I'm Alison grade. I'm the author of the freelance Bible. And I'm here to talk to you about how to be a great freelancer. Who am I? And why am I here talking to you about this? Well, I'm a freelancer with a portfolio career. As I said, I'm the author of the freelance Bible, it was published by Penguin. I'm also a film and TV producer, I have an MBA from NCR. And I work as a trainer and mentor on Creative Industries consultant, predominantly here in the UK, where I'm based, but increasingly, internationally, met a lot of it, thanks to our COVID-19. So the book was published a year ago, last March has been an Amazon number one bestseller, it is available these days on amazon.com. And what do I think makes a great Freelancer? Well, I think that successful freelancers psyche is made up of three parts. And it's a bit like that stall there, those three legs need to be bearing equal weight, and they are made up of your skills, your ability to deliver your freelance services, your financial drive your emphasis to actually sell your time for money and your desires, your passion to get your message out there. And if those three legs aren't bearing equal weight, then the stall topples over, and so does your freelance career. Because let's think about it if you don't have skills, but you've got financial drive and desires, you can't deliver for your client. If you don't have financial drive, you might have the skills and the desire. If you don't have the financial drive, you don't have a career, you have a hobby. And if you don't have the desire to get your message out there, you might be able to deliver for your clients, you might have the drive to get the money, but you're not getting your message out there in front of people. So those three legs need to be carrying equal bearing equal weight. And you as the freelancer want to be sitting on top of that stool, with a smile on your face, looking after you. So how do we do this? It's not enough just to work in our freelancing during the work that we do great freelancers work on their freelancing. So what do I mean by that working in your freelancing is all about spinning those plates, all the different projects, you're working on all the projects in the pipeline, and those pay the

bills, so they tend to take priority. But working on your freelancing is what drives your career forward, being the CEO of your freelance career, working out what direction you want to take it in. And following a strategy to get yourself that



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you need to be the finance



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director as well, you need to be sending the invoices or making sure that they get paid, you need to be the marketing and sales director, you need to getting out and finding new clients selling to them writing proposals getting out there. And you need to be the Operations Director, working out what needs to be done well, when uh, making sure that you leave time to work on your freelancing and those many hats, as well as in your freelancing. So let's go to those three legs of that stool. And I'm gonna give you some strategies and tactics about how you can think about those to move your freelancing career forward. So skills, it's all about understanding the utility, the value that you bring to customers. And knowing your mindset as well. The freelance mindset is incredibly important. We need to work out how we feel about the beach, have how secure we feel in that insecurity, irregular income, irregular work, irregular projects, that feast and famine, it's all or nothing. What is our risk profile towards that? equally? What about our work life balance? How many hours a week do we want to be working? Can we be working? Do we have other constraints on our time? Also remembering that as a freelancer, it's okay to say no. And we have to look out for ourselves. There's no boss, there's no HR department looking out for us. We have to look out for ourselves. So it's finding that space of balance for ourselves and working out how we feel about that. Then we want to ask ourselves, well, what sort of freelance like am I I know I divide freelancers into two types. I see the eye shaped freelancer, somebody who has a huge depth of experience on and they tend to sell their same service over and over again and they just get more and more experienced. You see there's a lot of value starts with film crews, lots of eyes shaped people or fulfilling specialist roles on their productions. But increasingly, I see more and more opportunity for t shaped freelancers, people with a depth of experience. But actually a lot of their skill is in that breadth of collaboration, that facilitation, that enabling that project management, that producing, bringing teams together making things happen. And after we've combined it quite hard to value, that collaboration ability, because we tend to focus on the eye shape and recognizing that, and not recognizing the skill and the time that goes into that collaboration. So if you're that sort of Freelancer who works in that T shaped way, remember to value your collaboration as well as your depth of experience. And the

best way to look at our skills and to work out what we have to offer in the marketplace is to do a skills audit. And what we want to do is look at our hard skills, our soft skills and our other skills. So our hard skills are all the technical skills that we need to do the work that we do want to do. Our soft skills are all those transferable interpersonal skills, all those on maybe your basic office type skills with Microsoft, Excel, and word and all those kinds of things. Plus our leadership skills, or team working skills, or management skills, or general communication skills, all those sort of skills, if we've had any sort of job, or volunteer position, in our careers, to date, any of those skills or soft skills that we bring to our future careers, and our other skills, or our hobbies, or interests, or passions. And particularly when we're starting out in our careers, or if we're looking to change, those can be really valuable because if we love gardening, or we love baking, or we speak five or six languages, we can find companies that will value those specific skills alongside our hard and soft skills, and it will help us stand out. So how do we do a skills audit? We want to look at where am I at now? What am I hard skills? What are my soft skills? What are my other skills, right a list of all of the skills that you can think of? I label them hard, soft and other? Then think about where do I want to get to in six months time in a year's time, whatever timeframe you want? What skills do you need to be in that place? Again, write a list hard skills, soft skills, other skills,



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then you want to rate yourself? How good am I at the skills I've listed? So a scale of one to five? How good am I at all of those. And that's great. That's a great starting point. But that's incredibly subjective. So now we want to get some corroboration. We want to talk to trusted friends, colleagues, tutors, employers, people in our network, who will give us an objective opinion, and rate us on our skills audit on our hard skills on our soft skills on our other skills, and also asked them actually have I missed any skills out. And the reason we go for the corroboration is actually the things that we take for granted in ourselves are often the things that people most value in us. But because we take them for granted in ourselves, then we can't see them. We're blind to them. So that corroboration helps us to understand. And from that we can look at where there are discrepancies in the ratings where we're scoring low, and we can make an action plan to develop our skills. The other thing we want to consider as freelancers is actually, what does success mean to me because I'm not trying to climb a corporate ladder as a freelancer, I can be I'm the CEO of my own career, after all, so I can choose what direction I want to go in. So I can define a direction that is what I define as success. So what does that mean? Where do I want to get to I don't have to compare myself to other people. I'm not chasing the promotion of the person sitting in that desk next to me. So remembering that gives us autonomy and freedom and independence to choose the career that we want to choose in the way that we want to do it. When we've got all of that together, we can take a blank sheet of paper

and get down a whole list of all the things that we can do all the services that we can offer as a freelancer in the marketplace. So we'll look at how we turn that into marketing in a minute. But first of all we want to look at, okay, I know what I can do, have the finances work, how does the money work, and that's a two way thing. We need to know what we need to live on. But equally we need to try and work out what we're worth in the marketplace. So, in order to work out what we need to live on, we need to do an individual living budget and this calculates your income after tax. So you'll need to factor that in the taxes to calculate your in your annual turnover, and it informs what you need to charge, but it doesn't tell you your value. So how do you do the individual living budget? Where you need to look at a spreadsheet very much like this, where you're looking at your rent, your utility bills, what do you pay for your mobile? What is your car cost to run? If you've got one? What about public transport? What are you spending on groceries, entertainment, all of those kind of things? What do you spend to live the life that you want to live and be realistic to this? If you buy a coffee from Starbucks or somewhere like that every day, make sure you can't get in? Because they do add up? What are your savings plans, what are your loan repayments, all of those different things. And if you're looking at, if you've been living in our lower cost accommodation, you've been at university, you're just finishing something like that if you need to move to a new new city, new environment, new costs, think about those costs based on where you'll be living to do your work. So again, this works out what you need to live on and it after you've paid all your taxes. So that's what goes into your pocket after all of that. So you'll need to factor back in the taxes that you would have to pay on that, to work out your annual turnover. Your annual turnover is what you built your clients over the year. So that's about how much we need to live. So how do we manage our money that if we're freelance, it works really well to have separate accounts. So a business current account a checking account, day to day business transactions go through that a savings account to put your taxes money aside, set that aside, every time an invoice comes in, put some money to one side, then you can't be caught short at the end of the year. And then you have your personal account your personal current account your personal checking account, that's where you spend your personal money from. So if I buy something on Amazon, a book that is my research for work, that might come out and but that would come out of my business account as a business expense. If I buy a book on Amazon to give to my son, that is personal spending. So I would pay for ads, that keeps my transactions all separate so that I can easily work out what it's cost to run my business because when we freelance We not only do we bill our clients and we get paid with the tax money, we will be able to charge business expenses are according to local legislation, against our income before taxes, or before taxes, our own card, so those expenses are really valuable to keep track of. So that's about what's going out how do we work out our value. And it is partly based on what we need to answer live. So if we know what our annual turnover needs to be based on our enjoyed individual living budget, if we've got a sense of how much on how much our daily rate might

be, we can work out how many days in a year, we need to work to get that because as freelancers, we're not going to be paid every day of the year, we're not going to be paid 365 days of the year, we're probably not going to be paid 52 times five days of the year, you know, there's always quite a couple of weeks at Christmas and a week at Easter. Plus, if we take another week off, that's probably 48 weeks that we could possibly be working again, we're probably not going to be paid all of that. I like to work on about 50%. So if I can work out a rate based on 24 weeks or 120 days in a year, I can see whether I might be likely to hit that or not. So just thinking about how many days in a year can we actually get paid work when you think about our experience because our rate changes with experience and even within a certain category. So when I first started out as a producer, I'd been working in film and TV for 10 years. But I was at the lower end of the producer scale for pay, because it was my first producing gig. And then it went up with more so our rates can change. And we want to benchmark we want to do our research, looking for places where we can find information about rates. So there might be unions or guilds or societies where communities in your sector come together and there might be recommended rates or things like that. So research that look for Freelancer call outs for jobs and work and opportunities that are a level that you could do. Again, you can look at permanent positions that relate to what you're trying to do. But remember, it will cost the company more than the advertised salary to hire you because they'll still need to provide you with desk and equipment and all of that. So, benchmarking doing that research can start to give you a picture of all of the different other scale of right So that you might charge, you want to look at different sector variations as well, because if I'm being a production manager or producer and film and TV, I'd get paid that rate, if I'm teaching students about what that means I'd get a teaching rate. So there might be different variations there. Also, there might be different intended audiences. If I'm doing pitch work for a client, they might ask for a reduced rate on the basis that if they get the commission, they would take the on and do that for work. So what does that look like for you. So that's about our value. And importantly, what we think about our value want to look at the relationship between price and demand. So this graph here shows you that on the y axis, you've got price, and on the x axis, you've got demand. So as demand changes on price change, and also as price changes, demand changes. So as the price goes up, you can see that demand goes down. As the price goes down, demand goes up. So we can use that information to price our time. If we're super, super busy, and we've got work coming out of our ears, we can look to put our prices up, yes, we might lose one or two clients. But the joy of this graph is that you actually are the same along the line. So by putting your prices are up, demand might go down, but you just move up the line. So you're, you earn the same along the line. So using price to our effect, or alter your the demand for your time and your services. So put your prices up, there's less demand, you're earning the same. So you've got more capacity to have some life for yourself, find more work, all of those different things. If when you put prices up, you find that demand stays the same, then you

haven't actually priced up to the lights, there's probably more scope to put your prices up. And when I'm pitching to a client, I always listen out for the sharp intake of breath. So when a client asked me how much is a project going to cost? And I tell them, if I don't hear a sharp intake of breath, then I think I come away thinking I've underpriced myself, I've left money on the table. If they agree too quickly, I could have asked for more. I'm a freelancer, I offer specialist services, I'm highly qualified, I've got good experience, I should be I should I want I want my client to think this is an exciting person to work with this is a great pass, and she's going to really deliver for us because that way, we there's room for negotiation. If I don't hear that sharp intake of breath, I'm like, oh, I've left money on the table. And there's so many different ways we can add value as freelancers. It's all about that secret sauce that we have. And that's about our skills, and our values and the way we look at the world. So if we want to add value to a client, we can fulfill a need what I'm crewing up for a film and TV production, I have a need for crew. When I hire my crew, they're fulfilling my needs, I can develop new opportunities for a client. So if I'm working with a client who wants to sell to creative industries, freelancers, they might work with me to help them develop a strategy and find new opportunities. If I could be increasing sales, my client, if I'm making short form video content that's going out on social media to increase sales. That's what my work is doing, I might be saving money on the bottom line, I might be realigning training and development for the client into an online space from the real world space. And that might save the money. So if I thinking about the different ways that my freelance services add value, if I can explain that to a client in this way, then it's much more than the price I charge. It's much more than trading time for money. And you know, when we think about it, when we go shopping, when we go out and buy things for ourselves, we often purchase without thinking about the price. We see something we like it, we buy it. So how do we it fulfills a need for so how do we think like that as a freelancer? And when we are thinking about our value and how we're going to operate as a freelancer, it's worth just wrapping up this finance section with a sense of actually what are the models for charging for what how do freelancers operate, because that can help us to build a picture of the sort of work that we might do. So lots of freelancers operate by the hour graphic designers, coaches, that kind of thing. By the day, a film crew or workshop facilitator by the week contractors, project managers and by the project consultants, strategist. So, look at that list, it's not that you can only do one, I probably work by the hour, by the day of by the project these days, in my freelancing, different ways with different clients, in my previous work in film and TV, it was much more by the week, so they're not exclusive. But when you are doing that by the week work, it doesn't always leave that much space for additional projects. So now let's go into that third leg the desires because as freelancers you are your brand, and you want to market yourself as desirable. And we also want to think about how can we explain what we do, in terms of how our customer understands that how do we get inside our customers head to think, from their perspective, customer focus thinking so fast, we want to unlock our brand

values, because we're all very, very sophisticated consumers or brands, we know what we like, we know what we don't like, we know what we trust, we not we don't trust. So if I'm my own Freelancer brand, companies, and people have opinions about me as a brand. So I want to work out what I stand for. And so that's a combination of the values that I admire and other brands, plus the values that are important to me, as an individual, I'm selling myself for my services. So my values are going to be integrated into the picture of my Freelancer services. And it's also about the values I believe a professional Freelancer should adopt. And you can probably come up with a whole long list of all sorts of different value words. And then to build your freelance a brand, you want to think about coming up with about half a dozen key words that are absolutely core to you and your brand message. And you could probably write two or three paragraphs about each of those. So once we understand our browser, we can start to get a sense of actually, what do my ideal customers look like? Who are they? Where are they? What do they do? How do I visualize them? And going back to our skills audit from earlier, if I've got other skills in there that I know, I've got a lot of subject knowledge in, perhaps there's an area where I think about, okay, maybe I want to offer social media strategy to clients, I also know loads about gardening, how do I put those two together? Well, they look for farms that want to talk about gardening online. So things like that will add value. So those are the customers can be really interested in me because I can fulfill their need for the social media, but have this added value because I know about gardening, and that's the business they're in. So things like that can really help us to stand



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out. And then once we've got a picture of who these clients are, who we might want to, might want to talk to, we want to think about translating the services that we can offer, from what we do into why customers might buy them. Because when we talk about what we're just providing factual understanding, when we talk about why customers will buy them that customer focus thinking we differentiate ourselves that connects with the heart. So we can look at that from there are a good example is the mp3 player, it's all sold on the wall, lots of facts there. Every time a new model comes out with a new feature and a new benefit a new what it does. That goes to the top of the lesson, everything else goes down in price. So this one is 1999 from the UK, Amazon site, but Apple are the masters at selling on the why. And they say why do you need an iPod. So you can have 1000 songs in your pocket. That's all you need to know to have 1000 songs in your pocket, it connects with the heart, and it maintains its price because it's not selling on the wall. It's not convincing based on facts. It's just connecting with the heart, and we just need to have it. So when we get if we can do that with our freelancing, then we open up a whole set of new opportunities. So for me, I say why do clients work with me, because I transform creative ideas into a business reality. What I do and how I do it might be different for all of those

different clients. For when I wrote my book that was me transforming my own creative idea into a business reality. When I do talks and webinars, I'm supporting other freelancers and entrepreneurs to turn their ideas into a reality. When I'm working on strategic projects, I'm doing research and writing reports and presenting to boards about how they can turn their creative ideas, usually a strategy into a reality. So everything I do comes under that why clients work with me. That's the core of essence of me have a service that I deliver to the marketplace, but how I do it and what I do can be different, what does that mean to you with your freelancing? So now we want to think about a blank sheet Paper eight what is our secret sauce? And why our clients going to hire me so we can go back to that slide, that blank sheet of paper about this is what I can do and translate that into why me statements Why me? Why me? Why am I customers going to hire me make it easy for them to want you. If we can take our solution to the client, demonstrate how it adds value, why we're the best person to do that, it going to help us it's going to make it easy for the client, the client has to try and guess how we might add value and how we might deliver on their KPIs. They're going to struggle to find a place to fit us we need to do that heavy lifting work for them. So why do companies hire freelancers? So companies hire freelancers, either because they have specialist skills who have specialist skills, we come in for a short period of time experts in our area, and we deliver that to the company and the company doesn't need those skills full time. Or we go in and we add capacity. So we add capacity on and the client is super busy, it's seasonal, they've got extra projects, we come in with our specialist skills to support their team. So a good example of this is social media support. So if I'm do social media strategy and support for businesses, I can go into a business and offer my specialist services because they don't have that in house. And I could do that a day a week or for a short consultancy project, whatever it might be. So I go in with specialist skills, and I support them because they don't have them in house. Equally, I could work in an agency that delivers social media strategies and implementation to businesses. And at that point, I'm adding capacity. The importance here is the story that I tell. Because if I'm adding capacity, that company is going to know about the skills, the services and what I can do, and why they need me as different to that company who needs those specialist skills, we might need to take more and more of a journey as to the value of social media, what it can do for their business, why it's important. So they might not be as bought in so we have, we can understand that we can come up with different sales on narratives to our clients. And for me, freelancing is very much like dating. So why do I think freelancing is like dating, because those first impressions count. When we first go on a date, we first look at somebody, those first impressions are really important. We've also when we go on a date, we've got to walk into the room believing we bring utility, we bring value. I've been on our many dates,



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many years ago now. But many dates, we're just haven't felt great. I've got like desperate tattooed on my forehead, I'm not feeling myself, and the date doesn't work,



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because



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I don't believe in me, so the other person doesn't believe in me. Equally, we go dating because we're looking for a long term relationship. That's the same with freelancing. We want to build long term relationships with our clients. We're looking for people who share our values. And for me that courtship is really important. Just like in dating, getting to know somebody, seeing if we share each other's values, be starting low key and building builds trust we want to be someone people want to spend time with. So that whole courtship and dating ritual is really valuable when we're freelancing. So that's all great sales. And that's fantastic. How do I find these clients today? So the anthropologist Robin Dunbar talks about the number 150. And he describes that as we've all got about 150 people in our networks, who, if we bumped into them in a bar and a cafe unexpectedly unannounced, we'd both know who each other were out of context. And it wouldn't be an issue to sit down and have a conversation with other people we know well, so we can write a list of all of those people in our network. And then what we want to do is think about what role they play, because not all of them will be able to offer us work. Some will be our sponsors, and they're great people. sponsors are brilliant. They talked about you when you're not in the room. So we want loads of those mentors are fabulous. There are people who are a little bit ahead of us who can help and support us and give us some advice. But there's an awful lot of people who don't fit into those categories, who also want to offer us work. But actually they have networks. Think about Domino's number. They've got 150 people in their network. So if they've got if all my 150 people have 150 people in my in their networks, that's 150 times 150 22,500 people at one step removed. So these introducers are really valuable, because they can introduce us to possible people in our network. So if I've got say 100 introducers on my network, and each of them has three people that they could introduce me to that 300 people I can meet so I can grow my network. Really quickly from trusted sources. And that's really important. And just to say, if you do keep a spreadsheet with data, just be mindful of data protection and make sure you are secure on any data that you look after. So what we what we want to do now we've got a vision, we've got to go out to these introducers, we're going to find new

people are going to grow on network. But how do we do that? What we need to do is we need to write some winning emails. And these are short emails. These are not essays, novels, dissertations, whatever they are short emails, they should take 15 seconds to read to win 15 minutes of somebody's time. And they start with a quick opener, a polite Hello, a hook line, what's the problem? or need you perceive the customer to have? What's the premise? I'm the best at solving your problem? Because that's the Why me, I'm the best at solving your problem. Because taught to this third party, they'll corroborate if you're being introduced by someone in your network that's already corroboration. And then how about we have a call for 15 minutes. So we're just looking for a quick call with somebody, it's really hard. If I receive a really short well written email like that, it's hard for me to turn it down. If you send me an essay, it's going to arrive in my inbox, I'm going to look I'm going to get all that's a long email, I don't have time to deal with that at the moment, I'll come back to it later. And I'll look at it a couple of days later. Oh, I don't have time to deal with that in the moment. And it'll just slide and slide that quick, short email that's really focused, really solutions focused is going to help you land those meetings to build your networks and look for opportunities. So now we've got our our meeting, we need to prepare for the call. So we need to research the past on the project, the client, the people in common lots of research, all the time thinking, how can we solve their problem? Why me? Am I talking their language, all of these things. So we prepare for the call so that we're ready to go on the first date. And we want to have our pitch ready. But equally, we want to listen, go on a date. And all we do is talk we don't hear from the other person, it's not a good date, it needs to include listening. So what's important to the client What's missing? What are they think they need to solve their problem, because they might have a different approach something you've not thought or they just might not really understand what you do, especially if you're offering specialist skills, you're looking to build a relationship for the future you want to be someone they want to work with.



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So take some time to listen and recognize buying signals. If they say to you, halfway through the conversation, what are you doing next Thursday, stop selling and get your diary out. And you want to conclude the meeting with actions. Because if you're offering specialist services, specialist skills, they're not going to know what needs to happen next. If they're if you're coming in to add capacity, they're going to be too busy. So we want to follow up with actions whether that's a pitch deck, a presentation proposal, or a short email, whatever it might be conclude the meeting with action so that we can secure the second date where we want to sell them a little thing, start slowly start low key so fast, we need to qualify the client. So what do I mean by that? I need to know that they need my services, they've got a budget for my services, and they want them now. And if the answer to all that is yes, then I'll say to them, so I'll do that for x. And I'll stop talking. Because

there's only three possible answers the client can get if they can say yes, that's great. How do I swear do we sign? No, that's a bit odd, because we've just qualified you. So we want to probe that more. And we'll get lots of maybes. And again, we want to probe that and understand work out when to follow up. And some maybes will turn to yeses, some will stay as not some more time to nose and some will stay a bit in the Navy. So we'll have to decide how many times we go back to them before we move on to somebody else. So then we've got our project, a client says yes, delivering a piece of work. So we want to ensure clear communications with our client manage their expectations. So they know what how it's going to work. When I'm working on a film production project that communication is hour by hour and mode. A lot of the time with the client or with the team on the project. I'm doing consultancy, if I started talking about hour by hour, I would be driving them nuts, because I might speak to them once a week or twice a month, that sort of thing. So managing expectations, measuring our time particularly important when we're doing project work. If we've sold 10 days at a rate and it taking us 20 days, we've halved our day rate and we've lost 10 days of capacity that we could have been looking for other work so measure our time. We might not be able to do anything retrospectively about it but we can use that knowledge for the next project. Make sure we finish the job if those last bits of paperwork hand in, don't leave a bad taste in the client's mouth because you haven't finished the job. And there's always a temptation, particularly when we're starting out to over deliver, let's give the client a little bit more than they've asked for. Now that can be that can really work against you because either the client might think she's making a mountain out of a molehill. So if I write a report for a client, they've asked for three pages, I give them 30, I've actually given the client a load more work to do, because they've got to read 30 pages, they didn't want that. Or I give them an extra bit for free. And they think that they give them I give them the 30 pages, maybe that's great. Allison, fantastic. write a book you again, and same again, thing again, I'll ask for three. But I know you'll give me 30. It's not good, because you're over delivering. And equally, you know, you're losing money through that, because they're gonna want the same thing over and over again, and want to do some selling, whilst we're delivering. So we sell them the three pages and we deliver the three pages. Actually, there's another 27 that could go with that. Would you like the more detail the drill down into that? So you upsell or if the project is a big project, divided into phases, so you're not tempted to deliver phase two with phase one. And then we want to invoice properly, and also ask for feedback. Lots of freelancers are scared to ask for feedback. It's really valuable. It's really important. It builds your relationship.



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And by feedback, I don't mean, tell me everything I did wrong on this project. And I'll do it right. We're looking for constructive ways to go into that conversation. So why like three

stars in a wish, tell me three things that went well on the project of one wish, what could have gone better, and I'll tell you the same and it can open a dialogue and allow opportunity. And if I'm listening and open, I can spot opportunity to sell my client, the next thing and the next thing. So asking for feedback allows us not only to improve or freelancing for future work with that client, or with other clients that can open opportunities. So that's my whistlestop tour through how to be a great freelancer. In summary, it is all about understanding why me why a client's going to buy with me, and then identify how we find clients who are going to value us and it's based on what skills we have. So thank you very much for joining me on this. Thank you for watching. My book, as I said is available on amazon.com as a paperback and ebook and audiobook you even get to listen to me on the audio book. And please do join me on social media and good luck with your freelancing careers.