

Frederick Factor- The Entrepreneurship Factor Transcript

Welcome to the Frederick Factor! My name is Sandy Dubay and I'm the season one host. Everyone who's lived in, worked in, or visited Frederick County, Maryland knows that there's something special about this place. One of those things is the incredible diverse community that continues to grow. Here on this podcast, we will be bringing Frederick's underrepresented business owners, entrepreneurs and community leaders into the spotlight to share their stories with you and find out what's their Frederick factor. Today, our guest is Janece Lee, a recent college graduate and the CEO and founder of HEISIS. HEISIS is a fashion company that creates trending, stylish plus-size clothing for young adults. And their mission is to boldly redefine style without compromising size. In this episode, Janece shares her journey as a student in fashion, and how she got her inspiration for a company with determination, commitment and a passion for her mission. Janece is building a powerful brand that's dedicated to serving her target audience.

Sandy: Today, I'm excited to be speaking with Janece Lee, a young entrepreneur here in Frederick. And I wanted to bring Janece... and to hear, honestly, a perspective from a slightly younger demographic than myself. I'm going to put you in that new young entrepreneurship category because I want to hear your perspectives. So, Janece, welcome.

Janece: Thank you for having me. It's an honor to be here.

Sandy: So excited! So, are you okay, if I refer to you as a young entrepreneur? I love that. Okay. Yeah. Okay, good. So tell us what brought you to Frederick County, Maryland?

Janece: Well, yes. So funny enough, I've been living here my whole life. Born and raised here, actually, in Frederick. I went to Kent State University. And now I am back home, running my business, and learning all the things.

Sandy: Can you tell us about your business?

Janece: Yes, so my business is HEISIS. We are a fashion brand for plus size teens and young adults. And the idea for HEISIS actually came while I was in college. I went to Kent State University but didn't really like Kent State that much. Um, it was in Kent, Ohio. But I knew that I could basically get all the things I wanted, which was to travel and have an internship and all the things because they had an amazing study abroad program. So, I was able to live in New York City. I also lived in Florence, Italy, and then I went back to New York City, which was amazing. And essentially, my idea for HEISIS came while I was at a body positivity panel in New York City, and all the panels were discussing women's brands, and basically how far

fashion has to come with size inclusivity. But all the panelists were talking about women's brands, women, women, women, women, this, women that, which there's nothing wrong with that, but my heart was instantly drawn-I had a piece of paper-and I wrote down where are young adults shopping who are plus size? The list was very scarce. And I was like, oh my goodness, I think I could really tap into this unsaturated market. So, fast forward, I come home, I think it was either fall break or Christmas break. I don't remember exactly. But I came home for a break and me and my sister were shopping at the mall, shopping. And we go into a couple of stores and I could just see her kind of just feeling discouraged with a lot of things didn't fit. She had more like upper chest and things could make her look a little bit more grown. We went Forever 21 and literally she's having a meltdown in the store because she's just like, man, there's nothing here for me to wear. I walked past all these clothes and all these other clothes for smaller bodies and man, like, *"why can't I have clothes just like that? That's all I want."* So, that was my final confirmation to really start the brand. And I was like, I'm gonna do it! I'm gonna start it. So here we are. Fast forward to a year ago now, HEISIS was birthed and born. And our mission is to really boldly redefine style without compromising size. And I really felt that a lot of people have that same similar story as my sister, where they're just like me, and can we have what everyone else is wearing? And then that's kind of where I started at.

Sandy: Wow, I love it. So I'm curious.

Janece: I don't want to cut you off.

Sandy: No, go!

Janece: But also the name that's kind of where the background story of the name it's called HEISIS it's spelled H-E-I-S-I-S but you pronounce it like "Hey, sis" because it's an ode to my sister. She was like the final push for me to really start it.

Sandy: What's your sister's name?

Janece: Bliss, but it's like "Hey, sis".

Sandy: Oh, "Hey, sis!" Yeah. Oh my gosh. Oh my gosh, were any of our listeners not with me on that one? Could you see the delay and then the final lightbulb went off.

Janece: Oh, you're totally fine.

Sandy: HEISIS, but like, hey sis! Beautiful!

Janece: Yes! It's so funny because...do not feel bad because you are not the only one. I have to say that a couple times. And the person is typically like, *"oh my gosh, I understand!"* Like it's hilarious. They're like, *"Oh, now I get how you say it. How did I not get that?"* I'm like, it's because it's... how it's spelled. So, you kind of don't think that's how you pronounce it. But that's kind of like the little surprise.

Sandy: Oh my golly, I love it. So, in the show notes we will include a link to the website to your company and everything and you'll be able to read how it is spelled there. Yeah. I love it. What does your sister think?

Janece: Yes. So, my sister, it's really funny. She's in middle school. So she was... so originally, it's actually funny how when you have an idea and how it continues to grow, or evolve, when I first started, I was kind of going for that tween demographic, which was kind of like middle school. And I'm not giving out on that idea. But it was a little bit more challenging to tap into that market with, like, the parents. And because I'm essentially selling to the kid, but also the parents kind of want to buy it. So it's like, *"okay, I'm gonna start with the young adult market, you know, teens."* So, it's funny, she is excited. She actually wore a pair of our pants to school, like two weeks ago, and she sent me a picture of her in the... in the bathroom. She's like, *"Oh, my God. Everyone's asked me where I got these pants from!"* She's like, *"Sis you're doing a good job"* And I was like, *"oh, my goodness!"* It made my heart so warm that day. I was like, wow, that was beautiful.

Sandy: You got a bathroom selfie! I mean, it doesn't get much better than that!

Janece: Yep, I got a bathroom selfie. She sent me a picture and she was like, *"Dude, everyone's like asking me where I got these pants from!"* And it's so funny. She's like, *"Well, it's really sad, because a lot of them are skinny and like, they really can't buy it."* So it was really funny. But yeah, so she's proud of me in her own way. I think that she's a little more shy. So, she doesn't really want to, you know, be in the face of anything. But yeah.

Sandy: Tell me, what are you...okay, are you designing the clothes? You're manufacturing? Where are you in your process?

Janece: Yes! So I am designing. I have a technical designer that I'm working with. They just basically make the technical drawings for the manufacturer. I also have a manufacturer, and then I receive my goods and then I sell them.

Sandy: So, right now if somebody wanted to check out your inventory, see what products you have available, they could go to your website. Or are we still in prototype?

Janece: So, right now I have... I started with three, or technically two items, cargo pants and bodysuits. The bodysuits are offered in two colorways. And the cargo pants are offered in one colorway. That's what I originally started the brand with, so those are still available on our sites. However the cargo pants, there's only like two sizes left. But you'll be able to view that on our website, www.shopHEISIS.com. And we also have utility jumpsuits which just went on sale because last week, I think it was, was national plus size day. So basically, I've never heard of that. Well, it's National Plus Size Appreciation Day. So, I put those on sale. But yeah, you can do it. Check us out on our website and order!

Sandy: That's great. So obviously, you know, looking to be developing a full range of clothing options, you know, what's the next thing you do? Do you go into tops, do you go into dresses, you know, what do you do?

Janece: Yes! You know, we're super excited.

Sandy: Without disclosing any trade secrets, of course!

Janece: Right! Yes, yeah. So basically, we are working right now on, well, I'm not working. It's been in the works for my manufacturer, for my spring summer collection, which will be coming out February 25th. So, I'm super excited about that. Because there's going to be like swimwear and different things. I'm not going to say everything that... I like to leave a little surprise there. But yeah, we're gonna have other items, it's not just going to be the assortment we have now, we want to continue to grow and offer new products.

Sandy: So is your demographic kind of still staying there within that early teen through mid 20s, something like that?

Janece: So an important thing to mention, which really also has shaped my business a lot in the small stage it's in, is also when COVID hit. So, I started my business during COVID technically. Which is really interesting, because now I'm like trying to figure out what 'normal' is and what normal isn't. So during quarantine, I just messaged people on Instagram, who I felt were in my market my demographic, like, *"Hey, my name is Janece Lee, I would love to meet with you and to talk to you about what brands can do better in the plus size community and what tangible things do you want to see?"* Essentially, that was my market research. I met with like 60 to 50 girls, young adults. And it was so amazing just to hear their story, and I would tell them the story about how my brand started. They were always like, *"Man, I had a moment just like your sister when I was in middle school. If that was in high school. I can relate to that."* And I was like, *"oh my goodness, I'm really doing this!"* And it's funny, literally they know that all their feedback was so helpful to me. I would literally ask like what clothing options do you want to like? See, one girl was like, *"Girl, I have a whole Pinterest board with things that I've tried to find that I*

cannot find”, and I'm like “Send me your Pinterest.” And it's so funny. She's like, “Are you serious?” And I'm like, “Yeah, send it over.” As I continue to grow, what I want to always be the center of my brand is listening to my customers. I also feel like the customers that I'm targeting the plus size young adult cannot put in gender to it. If you're trans, you can shop with us, there's no gender with this and all of them are so appreciative, like, “Thank you so much for hearing me,” that's typically what I always get after our zoom calls -- they'll either message me or email me and like, “Thank you so much for just sitting down and talking to me.” And some of them are kind of like, “You want to talk to me?” And I'm like, “Yes, you, I want to talk to you.” So that was so helpful in the process of even starting HEISIS, was just sitting down with these... my customer who I want to target.

Sandy: I mean, that really kind of gets to the core of all of us; we all want to be seen and heard. And, you know, know that our, our opinions and our thoughts absolutely matter. So, for you to take that and I love you sharing, you know, somebody sharing their Pinterest board with you and this like this wish list. I think that's beautiful. Yeah. So good for you! I absolutely love that. Super cool.

Janece: Thank you so much.

Sandy: You know, so with this podcast, you know, we're sharing stories of underrepresented business owners. And I'm curious if you have seen any of that, you know, if you have faced any particular struggles that you might want to share or could align.

Janece: Yeah, oh, my goodness, I would say that. So, I come from.... a little bit of background about me too is that I come from a family business, which has really made me who I am to this day. My dad was such a great entrepreneur blueprint for me just to literally just sit there and watch him all the time and just take things even before I knew I wanted to be an entrepreneur, I always had... always had that idea that I would be an entrepreneur. And I think one of the big things is that I am a perfectionist, and I am learning to not be a perfectionist. I'm actually reading this book right now... and I'm going to definitely plug... it's by Ellen Marie Bennett. It's called *Dream First, Details Later*. And it is such an amazing book. I ordered it like two weeks ago and it has been so helpful because I think sometimes, especially being young and not really knowing if I'm doing something right if I'm not, I've been really into executing and not thinking so much. And I think that's been the biggest thing is because, like when I first started, I could sit in my room and create all these what if scenarios, and there comes a point where like, you're just exhausted from that. So, I am really trying to practice “*Dream first details later*.” I may not have the perfect blueprint plan, but I am going to learn from doing, not just sitting and just expecting things to be perfect. Because they'll never will be perfect and to learn from those mistakes. And I think that's one of the biggest challenges that I've had to learn, especially during COVID, just

starting my business in these years; it's not going to be perfect, you're not going to get it 100% right all the time.

Sandy: I hope everybody heard that -- I really, really do. This idea of progress over perfection is a phrase that I use a lot. And because you're right, we can think ourselves out of implementing. Actually, you're starting something. Yeah. And just get all up in your head instead of just try. Yeah, dive in.

Janece: That's exactly what I'm learning and trying to implement every single day. And it's so funny. My family are always just like, "*Dude, you're doing it!*" Because I'm also very hard on myself. And I'm learning to not be so hard on myself and be gentle with myself. But you're not going to have it all together, and you figure out. And it's so funny, every single time that I have not sat and over-thought something and just did it, it may have not went the way it was supposed to go. But I've always learned a lesson, like, "*won't do that again, but hey, I can do this!*" But you won't ever know that if you just don't do it, you know.

Sandy: I love hearing, you know, this element of vulnerability and sharing with your friends and family. And as we... Janece is in the first class of this upcoming OED mentorship program by the time... by the time this podcast launches the Frederick County Office of Economic Development EmPOWER mentorship program will have already launched. But I think, you know, being really present and being able to share and hear from others that have made mistakes and to say, "*Oh, my gosh. I tried something last week, and I will not do that again. But I learned from it but at least I tried.*" Instead of wondering, "*Should I? Shouldn't I?*" And then you just get stuck in this cycle of indecision, which doesn't help anybody.

Janece: No, not at all.

Sandy: It's interesting. Your family history of entrepreneurship is, for me, a unique perspective. I did not have a family of entrepreneurs. You know, my father worked for the federal government forever. And I never saw myself as starting a business. Now, 19 years later, you know, here we sit. But it was this element of being able to ask for help, being very aware of what I'm good at and what I'm not. And surrounding myself with the talent that can help me, and ultimately my clients, to reach their goals and to grow and to, you know, help my team individually reach their individual goals by being a part of this team. So, but I appreciate, you know, sitting around the, you know, a Sunday dinner or the you know, the dinner table and you know, sharing those woes or those struggles and having somebody that can tell you to take a deep breath and it'll all be okay.

Janece: Yes. I would say my approach is the opposite. My approach is like, "*What's the plan? What are you doing to execute the plan? If the plan doesn't work? What's your contingency*"

plan?” That's what I am, that's me. You know, I'm like, 123, like, you know. So but it's definitely shaped me to be better because my mom -- my parents are so amazing -- my mom is the words of affirmation, really, like, you know, really nice. My dad's like, “what are you doing? How are you doing it? What's the deadline?” I'm like, “oh, my goodness.” So yes, I have a great balance, which I'm so blessed for, great balance.

Sandy: That's awesome. I'm curious about the side of creativity. I mean, you seem, you know, super creative in all aspects. But I'm curious: are you the illustrator? Are you sketching out the clothing? Are you the financial? Are you looking at right now as an entrepreneur, you know, solo entrepreneur, you're doing all of them. Whereas like your passion, you know, if you woke up every day and did some one thing, what would it be?

Janece: I love the creating process. That's something that I've realized over the year of starting is that I love... that I love it. So basically, through my school, I have access to WGSN, which is trend forecasting. And trend forecasting is every brand that you see: Nike, whatever they're using trend forecasting. But they also are at a big scale where they have like actual data on their customer, and what sells and what did well. But trend forecasting this platform, they give you all the colors for the year, they give you the prints and patterns for the year that are going to be selling and specifically within your demographic. It even goes down to how, I'm fully ecommerce, but even goes down to how to visually merchandise your store for who you're targeting. I mean, it gets really psychological, which is really interesting. So, I use basically my creative talent of what I'm seeing that's trending and have my spin on it and plump that out for my customer. I also think too, it's all about knowing who your customer is, and my customer, they are going to want the trendy items and things that other people are wearing. So, I have to be that because if not, it won't exist.

Sandy: They don't want last year's trend.

Janece: Yeah, there you go. They want the trends that are happening now and that are present and that are relevant. So that's my favorite process. I can get so lost and like, “okay, I like it in this color. But then like I want to see it here.” And I'm also super excited to say that my quality is amazing, which is really cool. A lot of the customers when they get their items are like, “oh my goodness, this feels so good.” Because you have to think there's really not that many brands that are targeting this demographic, well plus size in general, but my demographic. And the places they're shopping at, they can have two wears out of it and it's ripped, or they can have washed it and there's a hole in it. I had a young girl tell me... and it was not funny, but me and her laughing on the Zoom call... she has her favorite pair of jeans (we all have our favorite pair of jeans) and hers happened to be these like mom jean cut, and she loves them so much. And they have a like hole in the crotch area. And she's like, “I literally sew whenever I get a little hole in it. I'm sewing it up every day,” I'm like, “oh my goodness. No, that should not be the thing.” You know?

So, I'm super excited to be in that creative realm and continue to create and all those things. But I also want to continue to create, but also we create in terms of the plus size body. So I'm considering the stomach where, like the yoke falls or where the dart is, those are all important things in making a garment for a plus size body. And I cannot wait to continue to grow and to figure out all the different things. I don't know because I'm not plus sized. So, it's definitely important that I continue to talk with my customer.

Sandy: And that level of detail will really come through in your final sale and then longevity of your company. How has that learning curve been for you?

Janece: Yeah, it's been weird because there's certain things like even the cargo pants that I had that basically sold out within like two weeks. And that was all because of word of mouth. And that was like the support from the community here in Frederick, like my family and friends and all that stuff. Everyone was like, this... like basically the back part of the pants, they have like the elastic and then like the front has the button so it has just more give on the back for it. So it's more like it fits your waist better. So one of my friends that ordered from me, she was like, *"oh my goodness, like these are so comfortable. Like how did you know that this was like the fabric or like where this was supposed to go?"* And I'm like, *"oh my goodness, I don't even know."* It's...I'm not even gonna say that... It's like super talent, like I'm talented, but it was my fashion background. I look at different bodies and I'm like, *"okay, this will be good or like having this extra elastic."* Having an extra spandex within a fabric like if that's 5%, 10%, spandex is key and really, you know, how to get that stretch but still have the garment be the same and look the same. So luck maybe, is how I know.

Sandy: But we all just want clothes to fit, you know, and feel comfortable, and look good!

Janece: There you go.

Sandy: Yeah, I mean, it shouldn't be rocket science!

Janece: That's why a lot of this stuff... and again, I keep referencing the stories because they're just they're so helpful to me.... one of the girls I met with to she was like, *"I just don't get it. Because brands can just make so much more money like you have a whole, like, you'll have like five other sizes. Like, that's more capital for you!"* And she's like, *"I don't get it."* So, I'm super excited to even continue to have different body sizes and to analyze and to measure. And my cousins, two of them are actually plus size and I'm always texting them like, *"hey, can you come over? Can you do this?"* And like, I need a measure. You guys need to see this. And I just sit down with them. And I'm asking them, like, *"what things do you like? Like, how do you like your pants to fit? What's comfortable?"* So getting that feedback is really huge, and I cannot wait to keep doing it on a bigger scale.

Hi, I'm Sophie Smith from Platinum PR and we are the sponsors of this season's Frederick Factor. Our team provides place-based marketing and communications for communities and destinations across the country; we reimagine places. Find us at PlatinumPR.com. Our contact information is in the show notes! Happy listening!

Sandy: Do you think that you will be partnering with some local retailers here in Frederick? What does your scaling look like? That you want to share.

Janece: Yes, no, it's so funny. I had a meeting with the economic development team. And I definitely want to continue to grow and hopefully start targeting some of the downtown businesses and to be able to be a part of their assortment line and have pieces sold in there. I would love to do that. So, that's definitely something I want to do. And as I continue to grow, I don't want to grow too fast. I really, really want to get good at like four or five different things. Especially right now, I really want to get like my go-to HEISIS items. So if that's a pair of denim, which will take a little bit to really perfecting craft, but having those things that customers can always come back and know that they can come back to us for is really important. So, trying to hone in on that, which may take a little bit longer. But definitely want to start getting... definitely downtown and at some of the local businesses, especially if they don't have plus size because that'll just be great. Great for both of us.

Sandy: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Are you active on social media? Are you selling on Instagram?

Janece: I am. So when I first started, which is really funny, funny story. My dad... me and him are like...we meet pretty frequently.

Sandy: Is he like a an advisor for the company right now?

Janece: Yes, he's an advisor/coach. If I'm having a day where I'm overthinking, he gets me; he's like, get it together. You know, that little snap back. He's like, "*I don't know everything.*" And so it's my mom and my stepmom, all three of them all work so great together. Yeah. So a little funny story is: I had known I was going to do HEISIS. I had started, I had found a manufacturer, I had created three items, I got samples. And then once I got the samples, I then got my bulk order. And then once I got my bulk order it was time to sell. But my little perfection brain I literally had all my stuff in my room sitting in boxes, which it wasn't that it was in a huge order. And me and my dad are meeting and he's like, "*Okay, your stuff is here, what are you gonna do?*" And I was like, well, first I have to get my website, then I have to get this and I have to do that. And he's like, "*no, sell this stuff. Sell it and get it out now. Figure out a way to get it out. Tell the people to sell it.*" And for me, I'm like, "*oh my goodness, how am I gonna do this? What am I gonna do?*" So, this is also a thing you don't have to have, like, you don't have to check off

everything before you do something. This is a reminder that you do not have to do that. So, I was like, “*Okay, I’m going to sell all this stuff.*” So I just started reaching out to like friends and family here and messaging them, sending them a text message, giving them a phone call. And shortly after I knew it, I was like, “*oh my goodness, I’m really selling this stuff.*” And then I also went on to Instagram and sold from Instagram. I was taking orders through and like DMs on Instagram, promoting the post so you can get like a different demographic that’s not your typical one. I even had some people who wanted my cargo pants. And they’re like “*I’m a size small.*” and I’m like, “*oh, I’m so sorry. I only have large two, three, like I’m only a plus size brand.*” And they’re like, “*oh my goodness. Well, when you offer other sizes, like smaller sizes, let me know.*” And I’m like, I don’t even know if I think I’m gonna do that. I think I’m staying right in my market of just offering plus size and surely enough, I sold the items on Instagram and word of mouth. And then now I have a website which is exciting because I thought I was like I have to have the website. And I’m on Instagram and I’m also going to be using TikTok. I love TikTok. I’m actually obsessed with TikTok probably too much,

Sandy: Insert commercial for Platinum PR TikTok page here.

Janece: Oh my gosh, I love that you guys are on TikTok!

Sandy: Oh my gosh, we did a TikTok challenge over the summer. It was a hit.

Janece: I love it. I mean, the algorithm is crazy. It’s just like, you just never know what you’ll put out. And like, a lot of people are going to end up seeing whatever it is, your video or whatever, that’s TikTok, but they’re gonna see it. And I think it’s a great platform. I’m still trying to learn it, though. My sisters help me.

Sandy: Yeah. Definitely get the sisters working on that for you. That would be great. You know, maybe trade them for you know, \$5 off a pair of pants or something. Yeah, you’re I mean, that’s where your demographic is, on TikTok.

Janece: They’re on TikTok. And it’s so funny because my sisters, I have two sisters; Bliss is the one who was the brand inspiration, and Jada is my other sister, which it’s so funny, because she’s just started helping me now kind of part time for HEISIS. So she’s doing social media. And it’s so funny, because she’ll be like, “*no, I’m having a meeting today.*” And like, “*I’m the boss today.*” And I’m like, “*Okay, I mean, like, if you want to have that.*” She’s... she’s 17. So, and my sister Bliss, um, I had made a video because I had gotten samples. And I wanted to kind of like, have a sneak peek with my samples. It took me like, maybe like 15 minutes to do the video, and I’m like, “*Okay, Bliss, help me edit it.*” And she’s like, “*oh, my goodness, you’re making this so hard.*” Like, I would take like, I was trying to put words on my video. And I thought like, “*you had to do this whole process.*” And she took my phone and she did it so quick. And I’m like, “*oh,*

my goodness, I now I feel old.” But I'm not old. I'm young. I'm like, “*why do I feel old?*” Because I don't know how to work this. But nonetheless, I am learning. I'm learning TikTok. And I actually kind of really like it.

Sandy: Yeah, it can be very addicting as a user, as a viewer.

Janece: You got to limit yourself.

Sandy: Yes, we played with it. There's a learning curve with everything, but there was definitely a learning curve with uploading to TikTok. That's funny. Oh, my goodness! So, you know, you said that you recently met with the City. I'm curious; what would you like to see, if there's anything in Frederick County, that you would like to see happen that would make the community even more supportive for your business growth?

Janece: Hmm. I think I would like to see... there's not a lot of fashion here, which is fine. But I think it would be cool to have something.... I don't know if that's like annually, like a fashion show? Something more creative for creatives to be able to attend or go to, because sometimes it can be really hard. I'm so grateful that New York is so close. And I have so many friends there that I kind of.... when I'm feeling a little not creative, and just trying to like, get out of this creative funk. I go to New York, and I'm like, “*Oh, I feel so inspired again.*” I think Frederick can also have that capability, where if it's a collective, or an art collective, for people who are in different creative fields, that it doesn't just have to be fashion because as a person who's in fashion, you can get inspiration from like architecture, or there's just so many different things that you can find inspiration from. So, I think something like that would be really cool. Just within the community, different people from like, creative artists backgrounds can get together even if you think you don't you shouldn't you don't belong there, that'd be really cool to see.

Sandy: Yeah, I mean, I think the term ‘creative’ has so many different feelings that come up, I think, and meanings. And you know, people being creative with fashion as you are with the written word or campaigns and different things that we might do for our clients. The design work that, you know....Octavo is here, sharing office space with us, you know, that creative side of illustrations or, you know, logo or brand development, painting, you know, other more traditional art forms that are really prevalent. Yeah, right, direct. I mean, I think, you know, tattoo artists, you know, on the street, just, you know, there are a lot of them here in Frederick, and you know, kind of what you see, just walking around is kind of a beautiful vibe. So yeah, that would be fun. You know, my prediction is that you're gonna end up having to organize something like that, right?

Janece: It was funny, as I was talking, I was like, “*wow, I could, like...*”

Sandy: *“I think I’m pulling something together in my head!”*

Janece: Yeah. That'd be cool. Very cool.

Sandy: And I think that there are things, you know, that kind of the beauty of the pandemic is that it gave us a chance to decide: what do we want to be investing our time and energy in? Reprioritizing and figuring out like, it's kind of a... ‘a clean slate.’ Yes. I don't... yeah, I don't know if that's the right phrase.

Janece: I think that's the perfect phrase. And I think things always make sense in hindsight. But sometimes when you're in it, you're like, *“wait, this is not making sense.”* And I remember my last semester of college, when I was about to graduate, and I had the idea of HEISIS. I had when I went to the panel. So it was like, okay, you know, it was kind of just really like a passive idea. I didn't think I was going to really do anything with it. And my goal was to live in New York City. Which I want to go back to New York City to live. But that was my goal. And I was starting to do job interviews, and I was all around the city -- I was a crazy girl! I was literally not taking the best care of myself, really stressed about my next steps, which I think a lot of people at that age are, and now looking back, I'm like, *“girl, take a nap, you know, because it just wasn't that deep.”* And I think that I'm so glad, now looking back, because I was me, I didn't get this job. *“Why haven't I heard back?”* You know? I was so upset in the moment. And now looking back, I come home, and really was able to sit with myself for a second, to really figure out what I wanted to do. And I've always wanted to be an entrepreneur, you know? But I didn't know that fast. So yeah, to be able to sit down with myself, and I'm like, *“okay, I'm gonna do this.”* And I think the pandemic has definitely taught a lot of people that, as well. It's like, *“go after what you want, and decide what's important for you and go after it. Even if it's the hardest thing ever, you know, like little by little.”* And I also heard this really good thing too, is that you have to, you only have to get 1% better every single day. And I think that's just so good. Because sometimes we want to just do like, we're like, I'm gonna do this, this, this and this, but just 1% every day. So over the course of time, you know, that will grow, and you'll be better.

Sandy: I love that. I do love that! And you know, you sat down today and said this was your first podcast! So maybe practicing this and stretching this muscle is your 1% for today!

Janece: There you go!

Sandy: You have been an amazing guest and I have loved every second of talking with you. A couple final questions, I'm curious, you kind of alluded to it a little bit, but advice. What advice would you give aspiring entrepreneurs, either in your peer group or high school kids?

Janece: Yes, oh my goodness this question! I have so many things. But I think one of the things that I will say is, when you're starting something, I think we can sit down and compare to other people that have done something before you that's similar, and I think one of the things that I had to learn, especially as a perfectionist and trying to not be so perfect, is I would compare myself to bigger brands that have over 60 employees or however many employees they have making way more money than I am. But it's okay to be the version of your business that it's at. You don't have to try to be Nike, I don't have to try to be Under Armor, I'm HEISIS! And I think that's one thing that I've had to learn in all facets. Even when I'm posting on social media, or if I'm hard on myself, it's, "*You are not a Nike, you are HEISIS, and you want to grow, and that's going to happen.*" But I think, be who you are, and don't try to compare yourself to other brands.

Sandy: Wise beyond your years. Oh my goodness, that's beautiful! You're right. We all need that reminder every single day! I need that reminder every single day!

Janece: Yeah, it's so easy to do, and with social media you can just look at something- and remember those are highlight reels it's not real- but you can look at something and you start comparing yourself, you know, I'm not a Nike and that's okay, I'm not on that bigger scale yet and that's okay. And also, dream big. Just dream, you never know.

Sandy: I don't know, I think you will be on a much bigger scale very soon. I'm so impressed with everything that you have been able to dream and accomplish. And any client, we always talk about your target audience and how everyone wants to communicate to everybody; "*okay, that's fine, but you can't communicate everything to everybody. It won't resonate.*" Picking your target personas, and I respect that you are so zeroed in, and that you're so clearly focused on the demographic that you're trying to serve. Stay true to that. I applaud you for that, that's beautiful.

Janece: Thank you so much.

Sandy: So the final question that we ask all of our guests here on the Frederick Factor is, Janece, what is your Frederick Factor?

Janece: I would say my Frederick Factor is being able to get plugged in with FCC, Woman to Woman Mentoring here in Frederick, I love that program. I've been a mentee for some time now, on and off as I was here and when I was in New York or wherever I was, the support has been so amazing. And to this day, I still want to be a part, maybe a mentor one day. I definitely want to be a mentor one day in my life because it's helped me so much, so to give back in that way. And the support has been so amazing, even when something gets sent that has a parallel to me or something I may be connected to, they're like "*Hey, check this out!*" and I'm like, "*Oh my goodness, you thought about me? You haven't forgotten about me?*" And they have not. And I

just really really enjoy that program, and I think it's definitely really shaped my perspectives over the years to be able to sit and listen to other women and their experiences and I just think they're so great and I think the program has been amazing. If you're a woman in Frederick, get plugged in, because it's great.

Sandy: I love it, love it, love it! Thank you, thank you, thank you! That was fabulous! I'm Sandy Dubai wrapping up this edition of the Frederick Factor, until next time!

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