

Frederick Factor Season 2 Episode 10 Crystal Williams-Palmer of Crash and Catharsis Rage Factory

Ashleigh: Welcome to the Frederick Factor. My name is Ashleigh Kiggins and I'm the host of Season Two. Everyone who's lived in, worked in or visited Frederick, Maryland knows there's just something special about this place. One of those things is the incredible diverse community that continues to grow here. On this podcast, we bring 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?

So my guest today is Crystal Williams-Palmer, the enraged owner of Crash and Catharsis Rage Factory. That is a lot of rage in one sentence.

Crystal: It really is. And, it enrages people just to say catharsis. <laugh>.

Ashleigh: It really does. I mean, you sat here with me for the first five minutes as I broke it all down, making sure I could say everything right. It's a fun tongue twister to say.

Crystal: It is. It's also why a lot of our social media things are like "CNC Rage Factory." <laugh>.

Ashleigh: Yes. Well, you know what? We'll just go with CNC right now. <laugh>. So, Crystal, thank you for being here today.

Crystal: Thanks for having me.

Ashleigh: So, before we get into your rage room, which, you're going to have to tell everybody what a rage room is, because I think that is a brand new thing to Frederick. But would you tell us a little bit about you, about your background, and how you even ended up in Frederick?

Crystal: Yeah. So I am a Maryland girl, born and bred. I was born in Prince George's County and then moved to Anne Arundel County and was in Anne Arundel County from the time I was elementary-school-age until adulthood. And my background is, I have a degree in Shakespearean literature and I'm only good at trivia for that. <laugh>

Ashleigh: <laugh>. Good to know. Cause that does pop up a lot on trivia.

Crystal: Came up on trivia this week. It was *Macbeth*, and I was raising my hand. I'm like, I know the answer to this one. <laugh>. I worked for Corporate America -- for universities and for banks for a while -- and I transitioned to Frederick in 2011 when I met my husband, Steve, and we Brady Bunched our families together and moved in. And we initially came to Frederick with the intent of eventually we would move somewhere else and then Frederick happened.

Ashleigh: Yeah.

Crystal: As it always does. You fall in love with Frederick.

Ashleigh: One hundred percent.

Crystal: So I came to Frederick. I continued to work at corporate and while I was working at corporate, my husband was miserable. My husband has been in the towing industry for decades and he was really struggling with the company he was working for. And we decided, like over dinner one night -- cause he was complaining -- like, why don't you just start your own tow company? So we did. We started Priority Towing and Recovery. Okay. And eventually Priority Towing and Recovery took off so much. I was able to leave my corporate job and I took some time off writing and doing things that I thought would be passionate for me. And then, I started getting bored and I started doing more for our company. And then eventually Covid hit. I feel like the "Covid hit" is the big "stop point" in everybody's story, and where did that pivot go? So Covid came and I had a friend of mine during Covid go through a breakup. And how I process a lot of things is like, I will scream into pillows or I'll find controlled breakable things. Like, I'll take a plate, go hit it with a hammer. All right. Let's take a breath. Let's go back to getting into what we're doing.

Ashleigh: Do you go through a lot of plates?

Crystal: I used to. <laugh> I used to -- my first divorce was interesting. My first child was interesting. <laugh>. And then going from one to three kids. Oh, wait, sorry -- one to four kids in two years. That's when the pillow screaming really came into place. I'm like, I need to go in a closet. I need to find a pillow. I'm gonna get back to parenting. Teenage girls and a toddler. Let's do this. <laugh>. So, they were going through a breakup and they were having a hard time. So I took them in my garage. I let them break a mug in my garage. The breaking of the mug didn't do anything. So then I said, "Here, have a hammer." And there's the drywall in the garage, and they put a hole in the drywall in the garage, which is covered by a Bill Murray poster currently --

Ashleigh <laugh>.

Crystal: -- and another picture frame because we haven't fixed it. And I'm not gonna make my husband fix my error. <laugh> So the next day I showed him, because I was going to be honest. He goes, "There's gotta be a better way to do this, Crystal." <laugh> And I said, "Well, there are rage rooms" and then the wheels just started processing. Like, oh! The light bulb goes off in the head. There's not one anywhere near here really. There's some in Montgomery County, there's one in Hanover, Pennsylvania. But I'm like, Frederick would do so well with that. And then I started processing it and going through all the things. <laugh>

Ashleigh: So, what is a rage room? So if you walk in, is it throwing...? So I've seen them on tv. I've always wondered why we didn't have one. Now, I don't usually break something, but I will

say I cut my hair with breakups <laugh>.

Crystal: <laugh> Love that.

Ashleigh: I've had some very questionable haircuts throughout my years. When I look at pictures, sometimes [from] the past, and I'll be like, oh yeah, well there's long hair. And someone will be like, "oh, you cut your hair short." I'm like, "yeah, that was a breakup." It's usually that's how it goes. So now, I only get trims because I'm getting married. So I only get trims. But that is my way. But I think there's gotta be a healthier way of getting it out. Maybe something a little less temporary. So is that kind of where the rage room--?

Crystal: That's where the rage room comes into play. Because everybody copes with everything differently. Some people will, you know, tidy things up. My sister jokes around that she can't do my rage room. She'd rather just, you know, clean up my back room. I'm like, "okay, thanks Candy." Some people break things in a way that could be considered vandalism in the towing industry. We've definitely seen some cars vandalized during breakups.

Ashleigh: I blame Carrie Underwood for that. <laugh>

Crystal: Very much so. The worst one was somebody actually did white paint on the entire interior of a car and yeah, it was a pretty big mess. But that's vandalism and that's what you can get criminally charged for. So rage rooms are a safe, controlled environment where you can go in and just break items. Some places do furniture, some places do cars, some places are strictly glass and plates. And it's an opportunity to break things and let some rage and some frustration out and stress. It's also a big workout. Like people are swinging and throwing things and sweating up a storm. So you're letting out, you're bringing up the adrenaline. The endorphins are coming out. And it's another way for people to relieve stress and to process what's happening.

So we have the rage room where people can come in. They're given weapons that we provide and because we want people to be safe. So there's nothing stabby stabby, there's nothing that you can light fire to something with. So they're all things that are meant to be safely breaking items. And then you have, in my space, it's an individual space. Some rooms do allow more than one, but it's all with insurance. So you have to make sure you have the right amount of space for somebody to destroy something and not assault another individual. So mine are all individual rooms. So with that, you get the opportunity to go in there and just take, in my case, it's 15 or 25 minutes and just break as much stuff as you need to go. Let it out, yell. We have "Bob Dummies" -- the big dummies with the faces on there. They're Bob's and I'm like, I'm blanking on the name right now.

Ashleigh: Crash -- not crash. The um...

Crystal: Oh, it, uh, kind of like the -- <laugh> this is radio -- you're missing us. We're both doing the CPR motions up and down. <laugh>. They're body opponent bags. So they're basically used

for self-defense courses. They've got 150 pounds of sand in them so they don't move that much. And you can just hit them with a baseball bat until you're exhausted. And in some cases you can even bring in a picture of somebody's and put their face over top of Bob's face. That has happened multiple times. <laugh>. And we love a story that goes with that. It's entertaining. It's stress relieving. And a lot of people just giggle and "tee-hee" the whole time they're in there because they're like, it's naughty. It's naughty to break things. And it's an opportunity to do it. And then you don't have to clean it up. We clean it up. We actually don't mind cleaning it up. It's actually fun for us because we're like, "Ooh, look what's inside of a VCR tape." Or "Ooh, look what's inside of a VHS player." So it's a way to get rid of all those things and then leave it on the floor. We'll take care of it.

Ashleigh: Now do people bring in their own things? I know when we talked last week, I think you were going rage shopping.

Crystal: Breakable Shopping, yes. <laugh>.

Ashleigh: Breakable shopping. And I said, that sounds like the best thing ever. So now is it kind of like, if you have something you wanted to bring, you can bring that? Or do you guys prefer to just provide?

Crystal: So Thursdays are "Bring Your Own Breakables" BYOB night. So you get \$10 off and you can bring in your own items. We do have some regulations of like, it can't be anything that will set fire to something. It can't be anything that has food, like grills and things like that. Or could potentially, you know, catch fire to something. But, you know, we've had people bring in stuff on Bring Your Own Breakables night, and then they just wanted to get rid of it and they got rid of it here and didn't have to worry about it. They're like, I was gonna take it to the dump anyway. I'm like, well, I'll at least go through it and make sure there's nothing that can be salvaged with scrap or recycling ahead of time. So there we go.

Ashleigh: Good to know. Wow. I'll clear out my garage and be there on a Thursday. <laugh>.

Crystal: <laugh>. Tuesdays and Wednesdays are our days off. I go through Goodwill Thrift stores, secondhand places that downsize. That's a big thing right now. I know a lot of people are downsizing and they'll have companies come in and take their items and sell them at auction. If they don't sell at auction, I can buy them. So, I do check in with Mindy from Vintage MC. She's given me a couple of really great tips and tricks on how to make sure I'm not breaking anything historic or vintage. Because that's a big scare for me. And every so often I'm texting her and sending her messages. I'm like, is this a concern? And, she has saved some things. Like she definitely has saved some things, but then there's also the times I think it's something, [I think] it's a big deal. And she's like, Nope. <laugh>.

Ashleigh: She's like, "No, don't break that. It's worth about a hundred thousand dollars. Don't break that." <laugh>. Please don't.

Crystal: Yeah, and she's so smart with that kind of stuff. I trust her to be able to be like, "is this cool or not cool?" And the second she tells me, "not cool," I walk it. I've already given it to her. Cause I don't wanna be that person who's like, it's George Washington's favorite vase. And I'm like, oh, let's just throw it up against the wall. <laugh>.

Ashleigh: Well now are you gonna be hitting Bed Bath and Beyond since they're gonna be closing?

Crystal: I heard about that.

Ashleigh: Some dishes...

Crystal: As long as it's not Corelle -- that stuff is hard to break. I feel so bad when we get those. <laugh>

Ashleigh: Oh, I know. Well I'm like the Bed Bath and Beyond coupon hoarder. So, fun fact, I actually worked at Bed Bath and Beyond when I was in high school. I started working when I was 14 and I worked at a pool for two summers. Did you work at a pool?

Crystal: Samesies! Yes. Yes. 14.

Ashleigh: I was a pool attendant.

Crystal: I was working in the snack bar. <laugh>

Ashleigh: Yes. At Pohick Bay Regional Park. I grew up in Northern Virginia. And I left that job and when I turned 16, Bed Bath and Beyond was opening in Woodbridge, Virginia, which is where I lived. It was closer to home. And so I went and I did the whole stocking the store. Like got all the boxes, got to set up the section. So, anyway, the biggest thrill was I went from making \$6.25 an hour to like \$9.50 an hour. And I thought I was just the hottest thing on the street making 9 dollars and 50 cents an hour.

Crystal: I love it.

Ashleigh: But I also know that they always accept expired coupons. So I kid you not -- for the last, probably, 10 years, I've kept a bag of coupons and I keep saying, I'm gonna use all these coupons. I'm just waiting for the right time to use them. Well apparently I missed that right time because it was last week. But I know that they've gotta empty the store. So, I mean, I wonder if you guys can go get crystal or if you get crystal, just let me know. For some reason I would just love to break crystal. I don't know why. <laugh> But it seems like a really fun thing to break.

Crystal: You shouldn't break me. <laugh>.

Ashleigh: Not you, Crystal.

Crystal: I've actually had customers who are like, "Your name's Crystal? Are you really Crystal?" I'm like, yes. My name is Crystal and we break crystal here, but yeah, I'll make sure when you come down [that] I do have a ton of crystal. It's not anything special.

Ashleigh: Do you really? I just wanna break crystal. Not Crystal the person.

Crystal: No, please don't break me.

Ashleigh: Because you're a fellow tall woman as well.

Crystal: I am. I do enjoy your height as well. It was lovely meeting you the first time. Cause I was like, "oh, I love looking somebody eye to eye" Like, you're a female. I'm like, you get it. It's nice. Like, how many times a day do you get asked if you play basketball or volleyball? It's quite often.

Ashleigh: Volleyball I play. No, usually it's always basketball first. I'm like, "no, I play volleyball."

Crystal: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. <laugh>.

Ashleigh: So, obviously this is such a unique business and it was new to the Frederick area. What did you kind of come up against? So I work in commercial real estate, so I can only imagine what you probably came up against and even just trying to find a space. But what other challenges? I mean as far as finding a location, things like that. Getting the business even approved, finding the proper zoning. Cuz I mean, yeah.

Crystal: So on the part of zoning, the zoning thing was actually a great conversation. So I actually called the zoning department and spoke to a very lovely lady there. And I explained it to her and she was like, okay. And part of me, I was like, I was nervous. I'm like, I'm gonna talk to Roz from Monsters Incorporated <laugh>. And she was so lovely and she was like, "Okay, this is something new. I'm gonna need to get back to you." And she got back to me very quickly with an answer. And I got my zoning in regards to the financial part of it. That was a challenging thing because you have to go to banks and explain this and they're like, oh, what, well what kind of market research do you have? I'm like, "well it's newer -- there's nothing else here to compare it to. I can tell you where my competition is."

So I was declined a couple times, but eventually I found the right partner with M&T on 40. So they were able to work with me and were wonderful the whole step of the way. So initially my plan was to be near breweries. I wanted to be near breweries so I could have car smashing events because I have access to cars with the towing company. We work with the police list and if there's an abandoned car, eventually the title gets transferred to us. And I was like, okay, great. I will drain all the fluids cuz we don't want any biohazards, we can tow it up, have somebody break it and then tow it away. Easy peasy. I was thinking it was gonna be basically like batting cages. So initially I looked at the real estate market and I reached out to commercial

real estate agents and one of 'em flat out was not willing to work with me even though they had the space. The space had been abandoned for years and it would've been the ideal location, but they wouldn't even give me the time of day. And fun fact, they actually were talking to Tina from Dream Free Art at the same time. And could have very easily connected us together. They chose not to. And that breaks my heart, but I found Tina. And I love her.

Ashleigh: And she's talking about Tina Harper with Dream Free Art, who was also a guest on this show. Which is how we actually ended up getting connected too. <laugh>.

Crystal: Tina's so lovely. She's a connector. I can never speak too highly of her. So that didn't work out. So I went to another commercial real estate agent and they were like, "Oh, a rage room. That sounds amazing. What is it?" <laugh>. And, you feel your heart drop in your chest. And I explained it to them and they were like, "Okay, we can work with you." Then they ghosted me and I kept reaching out. I'm like, "Hey, this is something I'm interested in." At the same time, I'm talking to Frederick Commercial and I will name drop them because they're eventually who saw the vision. So the one company said, "Okay, you know what, nobody's ever going to lease a property or rent a property to somebody who allows enraged people on their property."

Ashleigh: Well they should never open a bar. <laugh>.

Crystal: I was just like, I was so flabbergasted. Cuz then they started sending me pictures of basically shacks in the middle of nowhere. And they're like, "You should buy this and make this your space." And I was just like, "First off, no." I knew it needed to be in Frederick. I knew it would work in Frederick. Frederick is the location for it. I'll happily go into more of that. I knew it had to be Frederick. It's one of those gut visceral things. "Secondly, thank you for giving me a brand." So now, as you can see everywhere, I'm an "enraged owner." Which everybody thinks is funny because I'm so happy and perky. And they're like, you're not enraged.

And I'm like, oh, but there is a story. <laugh>. And I have "enraged person" on my property. We have logos that say "cathartic person or enraged person." So, Shelly was able to hook me up with Troy Properties and they found my location. I never thought I would be this close to downtown Frederick. I am footsteps from the Weinberg -- like the beautiful, beautiful Weinberg. And I'm on 14 West Patrick Street. I'm in the basement, which means I unfortunately cannot do the car smashing events. But phase two hopefully will. <laugh>

Ashleigh: This is just the start.

Crystal: lit is. But I have an amazing landlord. He's so funny when he comes in, cuz he is like, "You did a great job with the wall color. It looks amazing." And I'm just like, "You're such a cool dude." So, it's lovely to prove people wrong, but it's also lovely to know Shelly got my vision. M&T got my vision, my landlord got my vision. So the right people get to you at the right place and that is Frederick. You meet the right people at the right time at the right place and it's gonna work.

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Ashleigh: Well, and you're in a really good [location] -- I mean, not just because you're downtown, but even just being in the basement. Like, you don't have to worry about bothering people above you or below you or, you know what I mean? It's just like a very nice, easy kind of space. And what else are you gonna do with a space like that? So it kind of fits so well into it. Yeah. I will -- just a disclaimer -- you never called me, because I would've gotten your vision -- but I'm just putting it out there.

Crystal: <laughs>

Ashleigh: No, I was just kidding. Shelly was great. Just kidding. But I mean, it's great to be downtown because even though you're not right on top of breweries, people can go to you and then go walk downtown and have dinner.

Crystal: I'm steps from Fredericks Social. I'm steps from La Paz. Like, I'm so close to so many places. Like, I share a parking lot with Shuckin' Shack, for my employees. We're so close to everything. Like most of the time when people are done, they're like, "Where can we go next?" And we're ready to list off -- like, what's your vibe? And we can tell you exactly where to go. <laugh>.

Ashleigh: So you had a really long walk to this building.

Crystal: Oh, that was so tenuous. <laugh>.

Ashleigh: It was on this cold, frigid day. But I think that's awesome. Now as being obviously a female owned business, how has that been to that process and did you come up against any obstacles there too?

Crystal: It's always challenging to be the woman in the room. Because oftentimes you were told very early on, and even my father told me this at a very young age: "You're going to have to fight harder because you're a woman." You know, he would make sure he taught me how to shake hands properly. Taught me how to talk to people, look 'em in the eye. My mother was the same way. She was constantly working and she was like, "You're gonna have to work and it's gonna

be hard.” So coming into this, I had a lot of help working previously in corporate America. Cuz you always are told there's one spot at the table. And I'm like, I'll just stand and watch and participate when I want to.

But also, I went into the towing business, never towing a car in my life and having to talk to tow truck drivers who do this for a living and talk to third party vendors and basically be like, okay, yeah, I may not be able to tow a car, but I can tell you every little bit about it and why we're gonna be doing the best work to make sure it's towed the safest way possible. So coming into the rage room aspect, as a woman, there's a couple different things I definitely think came into play. There's the “what is this?” And then there's also like, “what is a rage room? What's your background in this?” I'm like, well, I'm a woman. I'm mad a lot with a lot of different things.

Ashleigh: I've broken some things in my life. <laughs>.

Crystal: I'm like, would you like to see all the shattered glass I've done in my life?

Ashleigh: You took 'em to your garage. <laughs>.

Crystal: Exactly. Like, here, look at this whole new wall. So there's the aspect of trying to prove yourself and prove how this is a viable thing. So, and thankfully I didn't hit my head on too many glass ceilings. It was just primarily the one with the wouldn't-even-talk-to-me kind of situation. But again, when you find the right people, you're meant to find the right people.

Ashleigh: Yeah. That's a hundred percent true. Now, going back, because you mentioned something about Frederick and knowing that Frederick was where you wanted to have your business. So why was Frederick where you knew this had to be?

Crystal: So, as I've fallen in love with Frederick over the almost decade, Frederick is a city that is open to trying new things. I had a great conversation with the owner of Sherlock just in the parking lot one day, just chit-chatting about how his experience was bringing escape rooms to Frederick. And in your gut, it's gonna work because Frederick is open to new businesses. They're open to having breweries, having restaurants, trying different restaurants. We're open to Downtown Frederick's first weekends. And you get the opportunity to try out those things. And some days things are gonna succeed and some things are gonna fail. But Frederick's always open to learning and growing. It's a diverse area, which is wonderful cuz it definitely allows kids to get the opportunity to see what's available to them.

But the thing about Frederick is there's so many small businesses here, it allows those kids that come here for those reasons of diversity and seeing different things. It's not only that they can see Black-owned business, they can see a woman-owned business, they can see Asian American-owned businesses. They're gonna be able to see all those things and say, “I could do that.” And that's not something you see in some other cities and things like that. It's “oh, my dad's a farmer, I gotta be a farmer.” “My dad worked at a grocery store. I gotta work at a grocery store.” Here, you come up from one thing and you split off into another thing.

Ashleigh: And I think the community plays so well into and to supporting that and obviously, the support behind minority businesses has just grown and has become incredible to see. Especially, just seeing where we were to where we are going and hopefully that the momentum continues. But you know, you're right. There's so many opportunities. As we were talking earlier about, you know, CTC for the high schoolers and having this thing of knowing like, I know what I want to do when I grow up and being able to have that hands-on training. And that's something that I have not seen in other places. And I think it's so smart to be able to provide that because then it is a thing if you don't have to say, oh, well my only option is I graduate high school, I gotta go to college and then, oh, maybe I'll get into the family business or something. I mean, you really have the opportunity to think so far outside the box. And there's gotta be almost have every type of leisure type business and just every business you could think of in this area, except for a really good salad shop. <laugh>.

Crystal: But going into the aspect of the community supporting, I've met other small business owners and we've had those conversations. Like, Chris is amazing at Sherlock. I'm not his competition. He was like, "What do you need?" And I was like, "Oh my gosh, you're amazing." I love the fact that when you meet a business owner, they're like, "Okay, what do you need? Do you need anything? Can I do anything for you?" I accidentally met into the owners of Frederick Social recently and I was like, "Oh, this is you" <laugh> <laugh>. But it's like, what can we do to support each other? That's Frederick. Also, it's like: what can we do to lift you up, not tear you down. And I think that speaks so much to Frederick. I mean, after Opening Weekend, I really felt compelled to thank Frederick in whole. Like again, my love of Frederick.

Ashleigh: You can thank everybody here. <laugh>.

Crystal: Thank you everybody in Frederick <laugh>. I wrote a thank you note on the "Everything Frederick" Facebook page. Cause it could not be done without people speaking up saying they wanted this, people adding to my rage playlist -- giving me songs that they thought would be great to add an enraged song to. Or even just things like, talking about, what would you name the rooms. Which we actually did not name the rooms. We did name the speakers in the rooms. <laugh>.

Ashleigh: Nice. Yeah. I completely agree. I mean, it's one of these areas. Obviously being in commercial real estate, we've got competition. But I don't think we consider each other as heavy competition as we consider each other friends and knowing that we all have to work together at some point. Cause we're gonna be on one side of a deal or another at some point. And it's so nice. I mean, I literally carry a key chain with one of my competitors on it.

Crystal: I saw, and it's amazing <laugh>.

Ashleigh: But it's just one of those towns where it's such a rarity. You don't find this in a lot of other places because even though you and an escape room aren't necessarily direct competitors, you could be considered direct competitors because you are activities. People

don't have to be as nice. Whereas you guys are thinking of collabing. Talking about Tina, you guys are thinking of, "Hey, what, what can we do to collab?" I mean, you guys really do play very well into each other.

Crystal: <laugh>.

Ashleigh: I mean, if you're thinking about just getting to go in and rage, throw some paint around and then come to you and we just rage break things. I mean, it could be a really good day of rage.

Crystal: Oh, absolutely.

Ashleigh: So thinking [about] what's next mm-hmm. So we talked a little bit about the car, which I love. I think if we start demoing cars and start banging, breaking a windshield, let's do it. I'm realizing that I may have some rage built up <laugh> as I get super excited as we talk about this stuff. But what's next for you guys?

Crystal: So right now, we're new to the space we're in. We love it. But eventually we'll grow out of it. And ideally the next space would be ideal to have car smashing events. Tina and I are constantly talking about like, "What would our business look like together?" So like, are we a three year plan for each other? We think so. But we're both new and we're both developing and learning. So the big thing right now is just getting us out there to Frederick, getting people to realize what this can do to help them. And then eventually making it bigger and better, which is cars and all kinds of fun things. It seems like every week I get something different to break. And it's like, does this work to break or does this not work to break? And then testing it out? So, who knows? I mean, we had a lawnmower the other day and we're like, okay, this is, this is a bit much. <laugh>. But maybe a tractor. <laugh>.

Ashleigh: But really, I mean, it actually too plays into the mental health aspect of it as well. Because when you've got things going a hundred miles a minute and being able to just go someplace and just let it all out and then you can walk out and be like, "okay, I've decompressed. I'm ready to kind of [face things] head on." I mean, it's a really good way to go in and deal with some of those things when you start feeling that overwhelming feeling and you just need to get it out. If you can't scream in a pillow or that's not working and hey, what's the next best thing? Oh, let me head down to 14 West Patrick Street and go break some things and feel better.

Crystal: And we've had those like, "Hey, do you have a spot in 15 minutes? I need your room" calls. And, if we're open, we take them. Like, cuz we're definitely there for like those, if something's coming up and you're about to get in a bar fight and we're open, I'd rather you come in here and get your rage out. We do have a mental health ward in our locker room as well with a bunch of resources for people to reach out to therapists. There's a couple different therapy groups that have given me their information. So people can go in there, grab their information off of the QR codes. We have resources for the Heartly House and things like that.

[And we have a] suicide prevention hotline, because things do come up in these rooms and I'm not a therapist. I'm not licensed in therapy. I took no therapy courses, but I did tend bar. So I'm very good at listening.

Ashleigh: <laugh>.

Crystal: And people come out of these rooms and I definitely have heard people screaming and crying. We have tissues all over the place because we want people to be able to access those feelings. But oftentimes people will come out and they'll tell me why they're there. And when they tell me, I'm like, that's my secret to keep. That's not for me to share. Because that's what's going on with them. And in my heart, I'm glad they're there. Because at least they're taking that time for themselves and allowing those feelings to come out and whatever they do next with them, I hope they do what's best for them. Truly, everybody who's come in the door has been so lovely and I've not had -- well I've had one person who was upset because their son got a bigger breakable than they did <laugh>, which was weird, but whatever. But everybody else has been so lovely and so gracious for the time. But although I do have to stop some people from trying to clean up, that's always interesting. <laugh>.

Ashleigh: [They] probably feel bad. They're like, oh my gosh, I made such a message.

Crystal: One woman was like, "I need to get the broom." I'm like, "No, you do not! You do not. This is what I do."

Ashleigh: "It's okay. It's all in the package. It's all in the package. You're taken care of." Well, and that's really good to know. And if you haven't been connected yet too with the Mental Health Association of Frederick County, I will connect you offline. I'm actually the board president, so I would happily connect because, to know that you're passing out those resources, I think it would be great. I mean, we're getting ready to open a new walk-in clinic too as well. So I think that could be a really good connection.

Crystal: I just want bigger and bigger boards with all the resources for people to have because it's, it's crucial.

Ashleigh: It really is. Yeah, and it's one of the things that's popped up so much recently too as well. So you actually opened probably at what probably was the right time. Because people coming out of Covid, people who were, you know, being stuck in [their] house with [their] family or just becoming more recluse, and not having that outlet anymore, or not really not realizing how to get to that outlet anymore. So you truly probably opened up at the absolute best possible time.

Crystal: Yeah. I mean, we have people that come down as individuals, and do this as an individual thing. We have people come as groups, but it's the individuals that are the ones I'm like, "okay, what's going on? What do you need?" And sometimes they'll tell me things. I'm like, "We're not putting on a timer." If I don't have another booking, I'm like, "The timer's not on - you

take as long as you need to be in here.” Because if I don't have another person coming in for an hour, like, it might be the difference of five minutes that this person needed to be basically beat the crap out of the dummy. And they feel better afterwards.

Ashleigh: Yeah. Yeah. <laugh>.

Crystal: Let's do it. <laugh>.

Ashleigh: It's better to do the dummy than the person. For sure.

Crystal: And again, pictures are more than welcome to be put on top of Bob's face if you wish. We have things to attach 'em. <laugh>.

Ashleigh: <laugh>. It's good to know. Good to know. Yes. I don't have anyone, but just in case. Just in case.

Crystal: You never know, something would pop up anywhere and you're like, well, let's get that printed off and go on in. We actually had a party with a woman who turned 60 and she hates the lead singer of System of the Down <laugh> and her husband, who was such a sweet dude, he goes, “Can you just print out a bunch of pictures of him and put 'em on the dummy?” I was like, “Absolutely. But I'm also gonna need that story.” <laugh>.

Ashleigh: Oh, I wonder if she dated him one time or...

Crystal: She apparently found his voice super annoying. And I was like, “Oh, I thought there was gonna be more than this. But yeah, the dating thing would've been fantastic. <laugh>.”

Ashleigh: <laugh>. Yeah. That would've been a great story to have. So, kind of wrapping up things, we've talked a lot about Frederick and, just the importance of wanting to have the business here in the community, the help, even the fact that even with the zoning [you were able to] get in and get those questions answered so quickly. Because once again, you're so new. I mean, no one's had this before, so sometimes that can take a long time to even just figure out that aspect of “Where do we put this type of a business?” So kind of wrapping it all up, what would you say is your Frederick Factor? What makes Frederick Frederick to you?

Crystal: So what makes Frederick, Frederick to me, which is a fantastic tongue twister, also, is the fact that I have the opportunity to reach out to a resource and it's quick. And when I say quick, I don't mean like you're gonna get an hour response, but you can walk into Town Hall and if you can't talk to somebody, there's paper resources available for you. There's booklet resources available for you. If you don't have a connection, there's people you can talk to. Frederick Chamber of Commerce, you can talk to City Hall. Even just asking a business owner. Like, there's so many business owners that are in their storefronts, they're working, and you can be like, “Hey, can I just ask you this?” And, so many people are open to be like, “Yes, let's talk.”

That's such a huge thing. And that just speaks to the amazing small business community that's been built in Frederick.

Ashleigh: Yeah. The accessibility,

Crystal: It's amazing.

Ashleigh: Just being able to, like you said, you can literally walk into the Chamber and go talk to Rick Weldon, the Chamber president.

Crystal: I had a question and I went to City Hall and I was like, I'm gonna walk away with maybe like a phone number. And I met Becky at City Hall. Oh my gosh. The greatest conversation. She's so lovely. And not only did she give me her time, which she didn't have to do that, but she did. And that's it -- Frederick will stop what it's doing if it's the right time and it's the right person and they will help you. And that's amazing.

Ashleigh: I think that's one of the best things. You see everybody around you and you know them. You can say, oh yeah, that's, you know, so-and-so from... [That's] Becky from the City of Frederick Office of Economic Development. I know before I really got into the Frederick community, I would always think of those people as being so high up. It's just a very kind of nerve-wracking type thing. And now it's like, oh, you know, that's just so and so.

Crystal: Nerve-wracking -- my opening day with the business, I've never met the mayor before. I meet the mayor and I'm like standing next to him as he's watching my first customers break a television. And I'm just like, "we approve this!"

Ashleigh: <laugh>

Crystal: And he's cool with it, having a great conversation. <laugh>

Ashleigh: I'd be like, "can I get a punch pass?" <laugh>. If I ever get into politics, which, I have no interest in being in politics whatsoever. To many keyboard warriors. But if I ever did, I would be like, "Look, what's that recurring membership that you have? Because I'm gonna need a really good recurring [membership]." <laugh>.

Crystal: I am researching that currently cuz I've had a lot of people ask if there's a membership opportunity. I wanna do it and I wanna do it the right way. So, I don't ever wanna cheat anybody. I always wanna be as upfront and honest. My moral compass will not go any other way. And if I do a membership, I want it to be for the right reasons. And there's definitely some people that are like, I just need like five minutes, like, if I can get like five minutes once a month on an emergency basis, I'm like, as long as it's when we're open, I'll do it. <laugh>. Yeah. But I gotta look into that. I wanna be fair about that.

Ashleigh: So that's your "what's next?" Oh,

Crystal: Memberships and punch cards cards. Yeah. <laugh>

Ashleigh: Punch cards and all that.

Crystal: So you can punch Bob <laugh>.

Ashleigh: Well if you wanna tell everyone too, again, just reiterate your address, where you guys are located as well, andi your hours, days are open so people can stop by and come see you.

Crystal: Yeah. So we are on 14 West Patrick Street. Google will put you in our back parking lot. So the best thing to do is to Google the Court Street Parking Garage as the best place to park. And then we are on West Patrick Street between Colonial Jewelers and the Weinberg. We are open Thursdays for BYOB, Bring Your Unbreakables night. And Thursdays 3:00 to 8:00. And then we're open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Extended hours because it's Frederick and we love to stay up late and do things. <laugh> and Mondays we are available for your Mondays are the worst when it comes to working needs from 12:00 to 6:00. We are on all social medias as CNC Rage Factory. And then fun fact, if you haven't guessed it yet, that is a nineties reference, to CNC Music Factory.

Ashleigh: One of the best.

Crystal: One of the best <laugh>. Also Cs are big in my family. All of my siblings and I have Cs in our names So it was a little bit of a fun play with that. So

Ashleigh: Now whatever you go, your next thing has to be "C Square" or I guess "C to the 3rd Power."

Crystal: Something like that. Yeah. All right. I'm gonna need CNC factory to reinvent themselves in the next couple years and do something.

Ashleigh: Wouldn't it be great if they would come back?

Crystal: I would love that.

Ashleigh: Get them back. Get a little real McCoy back. Oh, gosh. Montel Jordan. I mean, we could really...

Crystal:

That would be a tour I'd watch.

Ashleigh: Yes. Yeah. Those would be some good tours. So, well, Crystal, I wanna thank you so much for being here and for taking the time to join the podcast.

Crystal: Thank you for having me. I love Frederick.

Ashleigh: Frederick clearly loves you. And, we love you for letting us embrace our anger and our rage side. So thank you for that.

Crystal: And hopefully bringing to the cathartic side.

Ashleigh: Yes, yes, yes. Sorry, I, no, no, no -- a one-track mind. <laugh.>

Crystal: No, no, no. <laugh.> I was just feeding into you. Playing with you. <laugh>.

Ashleigh: Thank you guys for listening. This is Ashleigh Kiggins, your season two host of the Frederick Factor podcast.

You've been listening to The Frederick Factor. Want to find out more about our diverse community that makes Frederick so special? Visit our website at www.frederickfactor.com. 'Til next time.