

Announcer ([00:00:27](#)):

This month's installment of Tune in Tuesdays is a two-part episode highlighting Developmental Disabilities Awareness and Women's History Month. We'll hear an update from Wendi Safstrom, Executive Director of the SHRM Foundation, about the work the foundation is doing on behalf of the workplace as well as an update on the foundation's partnership with the Entertainment Industry Foundation and the Delivering Jobs Coalition, an inclusion campaign dedicated to creating pathways of employment and leadership opportunities for the neurodiverse community.

Announcer ([00:01:01](#)):

Later, SHRM's Chief of Staff, Corporate Secretary and Head of Government Affairs, Emily M. Dickens, will sit down with Elke Suber, Associate General Counsel of the Microsoft Corporation, and Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard, Senior Vice President of Business Affairs at ABC News, to discuss how to navigate the challenges, opportunities, and transitions into, out of, and through the workplace.

Announcer ([00:01:28](#)):

To begin this month's program, please welcome Wendi Safstrom.

Wendi Safstrom ([00:01:35](#)):

Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to this month's Tune in Tuesday. We are bringing you a special two-part program this time as we recognize Women's History Month and Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. Both are important topics to SHRM and the SHRM Foundation and our purpose of supporting inclusive workplaces that benefit business and society.

Wendi Safstrom ([00:01:56](#)):

I want to start, though, by bringing you the latest updates from the SHRM Foundation. We have been busy and we're excited about our new projects. As you may know, the foundation's mission is to mobilize the power of HR and activate the generosity of donors to lead positive social change at work and in the world. For us, that means removing barriers and ensuring a robust pipeline of gifted, diverse talent that flows into the HR profession, equipping people from all walks of life with the skills and experience to manage the realities of the 21st century workplace.

Wendi Safstrom ([00:02:28](#)):

So, I am proud to announce the launch of SHRM Foundation's registered apprenticeship program. We call it HR RAP, and it will shape the next generation of HR leaders and our future workplaces. With support from the US Department of Labor, HR RAP will bring HR career opportunities to new sources of talent. The program focuses on bringing new talent into the HR profession by reskilling displaced workers, upskilling existing employees, and reaching out to people just entering or re-entering the workforce. Just last week, we made HR RAP official with a joint SHRM Foundation-Department of Labor signing ceremony. HR RAP is designed with SHRM members in mind, and you'll help lead your organization to close the HR skills gap, diversify your workforce, and build a skilled employee base unique to your business.

Wendi Safstrom ([00:03:19](#)):

The program's already up and running with apprentices ready to join your team right now. It takes between 18 to 24 months for an apprentice to complete the flexible program. If you're interested, just get in touch with us via the foundation website.

Wendi Safstrom ([00:03:34](#)):

Our next bit of good news is our research partnership with Walmart. Thanks to a generous grant, we've embarked on a study of the marketplace of untapped talent. Knowing we've got to measure what we treasure, the research focuses on bringing more veterans, people with disabilities, older workers, and people with criminal histories into the workforce. You can find this research on our website as well.

Wendi Safstrom ([00:03:57](#)):

And finally, the foundation's Employing Abilities at Work Initiative is moving from strength to strength. The initiative's goal is to support businesses and HR professionals as they manage the employment lifecycle for individuals with disabilities. For too long, employers have overlooked these valuable and committed workers, or they've been unsure as to how to recruit and support them, or perhaps they think they're too costly and cumbersome to hire. We aim to bust the myths around employing peoples with disabilities, and this website is a great place to start. Be sure to check it out in the episode resources below and share the URL with our networks.

Wendi Safstrom ([00:04:34](#)):

As part of our commitment to Employing Abilities, the SHRM Foundation is also partnering with the Entertainment Industry Foundation on this issue, and we have got a treat for you. As part of today's program, we'll hear from Nicole Sexton, President and CEO of the Entertainment Industry Foundation, Anthony Shriver, Founder, Chairman and CEO Best Buddies, Angela Geiger of Autism Speaks, and a Special Olympic Global ambassador from Special Olympics. These four amazing organizations have formed the Delivering Jobs Coalition, which is an inclusion campaign dedicated to creating pathways of employment and leadership opportunities for the neurodiverse community. We're also joined today by Joey Travolta from Inclusion Films. They have all come together to join us in recognizing Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.

Voiceover #1 ([00:05:26](#)):

Delivering Jobs is a campaign that aims to help create one million employment and leadership opportunities for people like me.

Voiceover #2 ([00:05:36](#)):

For people like me.

Voiceover #3 ([00:05:37](#)):

For people like me.

Angela Geiger ([00:05:38](#)):

There are approximately six and a half million people with developmental or intellectual differences in the United States.

Mary Davis ([00:05:46](#)):

Only 36% believe that people with intellectual differences can be leaders.

Angela Geiger ([00:05:54](#)):

One, it's about getting employers ready to employ people with autism. The second component is getting people with autism and other disabilities ready for the workforce. And the third is building community so that people are more supported. So, part of the reason that it's so important for employers is because this is a workforce that can really help them.

Mary Davis ([00:06:13](#)):

What we do in Special Olympics is ensure that our athletes have the necessary leadership skills that empowers them to go on and do other things in their lives, including having jobs.

Anthony Kennedy Shriver ([00:06:29](#)):

This is Kennedy Shriver, I'm the Founder and Chairman of Best Buddies, and I just wanted to give a huge shout out and appreciation to SHRM for your incredible commitment to Delivering Jobs, and to Best Buddies, and to supporting and hiring people with special abilities, people with intellectual disabilities, people with special skills. I can't think of anything better, if you're in the HR business, of hiring and encouraging employers to bring people with special abilities into the workforce.

Anthony Kennedy Shriver ([00:06:56](#)):

It makes your workforce more diverse, more dynamic, more exciting, more compassionate, more loving, kinder, and every company that does it, they become more profitable, they become more appreciative of their jobs, and they love their workplace, and they work harder, and they have great success. When you do good, good things happen to you. I know that from the bottom of my heart. I've been at this for 30 years. I'm excited about Delivering Jobs. We're finding hundreds and thousands of jobs, and we're inspiring people all over the world to hire people with special abilities. It's our future to have these people in the workforce, because when they're in the workforce, they feel loved, they feel kind, and they're paying taxes, they're earning an income, and we're doing a good thing.

Anthony Kennedy Shriver ([00:07:38](#)):

So, thank you so much for your passion, for your energy. I hope you'll keep going at it. I want to hear about it and I want to be more involved, so let me know how I can help. But I want to thank all of you for your incredible commitment to Delivering Jobs, Best Buddies, love SHRM, way to make it happen.

Joey Travolta ([00:07:54](#)):

Hi. I'm Joey Travolta, Founder of Inclusion Films, a practical film workshop for adults that are neurodiverse. So, the piece that you just saw, Delivering Jobs, was produced by Inclusion Films, and most of the crew and cast were made up of students or actors that were also neurodiverse. I'm at the

right place here with the SHRM family, and HR is a big, big factor in getting people with disabilities hired. For years, all I heard was, "If we hired somebody with disability, it would be an HR nightmare." Well, I'm here to tell you, I have three employees that I've had for over seven years. They're the best employees that I have. They show up early and leave late. Please help us get people that are neurodiverse hired in the field. Thank you.

Renee Manfredi ([00:08:48](#)):

Experiences from sports combined with leadership and training and opportunity give our athletes the skills and attitudes to become great leaders, competitors, and teammates in the workplace and communities. Leadership training help us get jobs and keep jobs. After the training, we feel more confident and comfortable in the workplace. We are better advocates for ourselves. This helps us to be more effective colleagues. SHRM's support for Delivering Jobs means more employers will be interested in hiring, training, and including people with intellectual disabilities. Thank you so much SHRM for all of your support.

Voiceover #1 ([00:09:34](#)):

Let's build the workforce of the future. We are ready.

Wendi Safstrom ([00:09:43](#)):

I hope you found that inspiring. I certainly did, and I'll be motivated to take some steps to open up work opportunities for those with visible and invisible disabilities.

Wendi Safstrom ([00:09:52](#)):

The Employing Abilities side has tangible tips, advice, case studies and metrics to show you how to succeed. The link can be found in the episode resources section below in the video player.

Wendi Safstrom ([00:10:03](#)):

If you haven't done so yet, please be sure to answer this month's polling question. Out of the below pools of talent, which does your organization need the most support with? You can participate by scanning the QR code with your cell phone camera.

Wendi Safstrom ([00:10:17](#)):

And now it's my pleasure to kick off the next part of Tune in Tuesday, which celebrates Women's History Month. We at SHRM celebrated International Women's Day yesterday with a webinar just for our staff. I was proud to host our foundation board member, Camille Chang Gilmore, Global Chief Diversity Officer at Boston Scientific, and Subha V. Barry, President of Working Mother Media, for a lively conversation.

Wendi Safstrom ([00:10:44](#)):

And now it's my pleasure to bring you today's panel of accomplished women leaders and mentors moderated by SHRM's own Chief of Staff, Corporate Secretary and Head of Government Affairs, Emily M. Dickens. Let's welcome her and her guests, Elke Flores Suber, Associate General Counsel for Microsoft Corporation, and Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard, Senior Vice President Business Affairs at ABC News. I can't wait to hear their insights and advice on empowering women to embrace their personal

leadership style, how to deal with transition, and more. I know they all have a lot to talk about, so let's get to it. Welcome, ladies.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:11:29](#)):

Well, welcome to Tune in Tuesday. I'm so excited to be joining you again in honor of International Women's Day. We did some amazing things in-house at SHRM last year, and this year we wanted to do something just a little different. It's fun because I get to be joined by two women who I admire greatly, women who I call friends, mentors, and colleagues, and we're going to talk about the topic of transitioning into a workplace, through a workplace, and out of a workplace. I think that's so critical. Every time I see someone doing these transitions or our CEO sees it, he'll say to me, "You need to write these things down," when something bad happens or when it's a good transition. And I thought this will be something that all women could benefit from today.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:12:16](#)):

So, I'm really excited. I think this conversation is going to be really great for men, women, people managers, individual contributors, anyone who's in the workplace I think could benefit from this. Now, look, this was supposed to be Convos and Coffee, and our marketing team talked me into doing it for Tune in Tuesday, so if you know me, you know I don't drink coffee, but I've got my green tea, and I think Elke's got her tea too. Khadijah, what are you drinking?

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:12:42](#)):

I have peppermint tea.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:12:43](#)):

Oh, see. So, we're all tea ladies today, and I'm so excited. So first, you read their bios, but I've got to tell you personally how I know these two women. And this is good for my young professionals and emerging leaders because this story is, I'm in law school, and one of my closest friends, Vanya and I decide we're going to go to an event at Howard University. We're in law school in Durham, North Carolina, so about a four hour drive. We get in the car, we drive to the event, we stop at a hotel, when we get to DC, and in the hotel lobby, we change into our professional clothes, and we go straight to Howard Law School.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:13:21](#)):

We get there, Khadijah is on a panel, and Khadijah just has this personality that draws you in. She's so kind, she's so nice, it comes across, and we thought if we can approach anybody after the panel who will actually speak to us, it will be Khadijah. And she's pregnant at the same time. She's an executive at Nickelodeon, pregnant, and she's just talking away about her journey, and we are transfixed.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:13:47](#)):

So, afterwards, we walk up to Khadijah, introduce ourselves, and she just starts talking to us like she knew us all along. And she has been like that the entire time. I can go months without talking to Khadijah, and if something happens, I know that I'll always get a response. And when she was recently promoted... well, not even promoted, she moved to this amazing job after 25 years in the Viacom family, she moves over to ABC News to become the Senior VP of Business Affairs. So, of course, you see the announcement on Facebook, and everyone is saying something, but I'm a little more personal. If I

know you, you're going to get a text from me. So, I sent her a text message just reminding her how much she means to me and how much seeing her do this is so inspirational. And as busy as she was, she responded immediately and said, "We got to catch up. We got to talk."

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:14:36](#)):

That's the type of person she is. She mentors people, she takes care of people. And right now, in addition to this big job, she's also chairwoman of the Black Entertainment and Sports Lawyers Association, so she's doing that. She's a mom, she's a wife. She's a D&I supporter, leader, and actually just received an award for that. So, amazing person, and I'm so glad she had time. Today makes one month in the new job, so one month in a new job, and she actually took time to do this. So, Khadijah, thanks for joining us today.

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:15:06](#)):

Thank you for having me, Emily. That's the best introduction I've ever gotten.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:15:10](#)):

Thank you.

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:15:11](#)):

So sweet. I love that. Thank you so much.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:15:15](#)):

Let me tell you all about Elke Suber. So, Elke is another person who I met as a law school student. She was on a panel at a BESLA, Black Entertainment Sports and Lawyers Association conference, and again, Vanya and I said, "She's from New York." I said, "Okay, that's something I got in common with her, so afterwards, we're going to go up and we're going to introduce ourselves." And Elke just adopted us.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:15:37](#)):

We were on the scholarship committee, she was the chairwoman, and then Elke talked me into applying to be on the board of the Black Entertainment Sports and Lawyers Association. And we had such a great time on that board, but really, the fact that this woman believed that I, who did not work in sports entertainment, she saw value and she said, "Look, we've got a great scholarship program." She's like, "You got some skills that we can use on this board." So, that was my first real big board appointment. Now, they didn't pay, and we worked a whole lot. Johnny reminded me a couple of weeks ago, he's like, "When I saw you got a BESLA event, I thought you worked for them because he would just volunteering and it just looked like you work for the organization."

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:16:14](#)):

And then Elke has been with me for some of the most amazing things that happened to me. We were just talking this weekend. The day I got my offer... the phone call that said, "We want you to come to DC and be Vice President at the Association of Governing Boards, I was with Elke at Microsoft. Microsoft had a table at a legal event in DC, and she asked me if I wanted to be one of their guests. So, I got to attend the professional development event and the dinner, and all I wanted to do was meet your chief government affairs person, because I'd done governance affairs. I got to meet him that night. He got

promoted that day too, and it was just the craziest thing. So, she's been around, but actually, she's an amazing friend and mentor.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:16:53](#)):

She's one of those people who I hope all women executives, and directors, and anyone who is working their way through the workplace has someone you can call and talk real talk about money issues, and financial issues. John and I talk a lot because I don't like to talk about money and people's salaries. He's always like, "You have to talk about these things because you got to make sure you got a plan, and there are other people who've done it." And so it's so nice to have someone that I feel comfortable saying, "Elke, what do I do about this situation?" So, I so appreciate you, Elke, for doing this, and I'm so excited that I have you here today.

Elke Flores Suber ([00:17:32](#)):

Thank you, Emily. I am ecstatic to be on this panel with you, and thank you also for such a beautiful introduction, and of course, to join with the esteemed Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard as well. Huh, these are two of my favorite ladies, and I'm just excited to talk to everyone today as well.

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:17:50](#)):

And she's our former Chairwoman too of BESLA, so you know, right?

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:17:53](#)):

I'm with BESLA royalty today and I'm really excited, because we're going to share this with the BESLA family. I couldn't do this, and all three of us have served on the BESLA Board, the Black Entertainment Sports and Lawyers Association, and we're going to share this with them as well. And I know they have a huge young lawyers' division, so it's my hope that many different audiences could really take advantage of what we're going to talk about today.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:18:18](#)):

So, I'm just going to get with it, right? Transitioning in. Khadijah, you transitioned in to a new job after many years at an old job and in the middle of a pandemic. You have a team that you have to get to know. Talk to us, what went through your mind when you got that offer and you thought about, "First of all, I've got to make sure I leave here in a good place"? But how did you prep yourself and what have the first 30 days been like?

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:18:49](#)):

Oh, well, goodness. So yeah, it's been a huge change and a really great one, I'll say that. I think, first of all, when I got the offer, I was super excited because I knew that it was time for me to take the next step in my career. I felt like I had really contributed all that I could at this moment to my previous company, and really had to think about the impact that I was making. I asked myself questions like, "Did I make the impact I wanted to make? Is a time to move on? Is it time to do some other things on my checklist?" And so, it was some real hard soul searching questions I think I had to ask myself. And I call it the COVID clarity, right? COVID has given us gifts in many ways, although it has been really difficult for a lot of folks, but it allowed me to really kind of step back, and think, and ask myself some key questions about really what I want to do next.

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:19:36](#)):

So, I really came to a place where I said to myself, "Yeah, I've done what I could do here. I need to start thinking about what I'm going to do for my career in terms of next steps. What else do I want to accomplish? What else do I need to stretch myself in? What didn't I learn yet? How do I come to a place and bring some of the skills that I did learn, quite frankly, that I think will be beneficial to this particular culture?" And I really had to leave Viacom, and I loved working there for many years in a way that was not only extremely professional and graceful, but also setting them up for success. I think that's really important. How you come is how you should leave.

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:20:12](#)):

And I've been really keen about that in my own life, but I also tell this to young people all the time as well. I'm like, "You can't just leave a place and just say, 'You know what, I didn't finish that, I didn't do that.' You have to set people up so that they feel as if you gave them your very best to the end." And I felt that was important.

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:20:30](#)):

On my new team, it's interesting to transition during a pandemic, because all the things that you normally would do in the office, you would connect with people, you would be in the offices, you would be doing the meet and greets, it's all virtual. So, I'm doing virtual meet and greets. But one thing I'm not trying to sacrifice is this idea of being present. I want to be present, so I've been trying to be at every meeting that I possibly can to get to know people, not just the folks on my team, but across my peers. Because people sometimes underestimate the importance of understanding the people who are lateral to you, right? Not just up, not just down, but the people who you might not have power and influence, per se, but the question is, do you have the ability to connect with them in a way that you can build alliances? And so that's been really important for me as well.

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:21:14](#)):

So, I've been spending a lot of time doing meet and greets, just learning about the business, learning about the culture, even more importantly, actually, quite frankly, because it's a much different culture than what I've come from. And not bad, not good, just different, and I'm pretty interested in learning how to flex anyway. I like to flex in different places, and so I've been using those flexing skills as a way to buttress myself for success, so it's been pretty cool.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:21:42](#)):

So, Khadijah, I can't not ask this. On the same day that they announced this position, you got an amazing award. Can you tell everybody about this award, because I think it's important that we talk about this, because I think, in your mind, you want to be able to bring some of the work you do outside of work into your new job and into the culture of the organization you're entering.

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:22:03](#)):

Yeah. I mean, I was honored. It was so funny to be nominated for this Ediscovery award. It's really about people in the legal industry who are focused and committed to diversity, equity and inclusion work. And I've always been pushing in this area, even before they called it this exact DEI thing, we've called it lots of different things, a lot of iterations of where we are today. But I really felt compassionate and passionate about the people who are in the processes that where we actually need to advocate for them, people who are not getting the chances to succeed as well in companies, people who look like us, quite frankly, women, just all the things that we know that that stop people from hitting the key marks that they're aspiring to. People are not just opting out, people are sometimes being driven out, right?

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:22:54](#)):

So, I've been really focused on that kind of work, and really, to be quite frank, not just in the company that I worked for, but even outside the company, through BESLA, but through other organizations as well, like Columbia College of Women, one of my alma maters, and other places where I'm able to use my voice to advocate for people to excel. And so that was actually a huge honor, but it was also more important, it was sort of a reminder that I have a lot more work to do because DEI work I think it's going to be with us way long, long time.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:23:24](#)):

Diversity is a big deal out there, and I know you are a people manager as well, and I know you think about these issues on your team. And so if most of you don't know, Elke was the first African-American woman to be an Assistant General Counsel at Microsoft. She is now Associate General Counsel and Partner. That's a really big deal, and the fact that she's been at Microsoft 15 years. And when we talk about transitioning throughout and within organization, I'm definitely going to forever talk about that, but talk about some of the inclusion issues, because at SHRM, we talk about we lead with inclusion, it's I&D for us, because if you don't set the table and have an inclusive environment, it's going to be very hard to use the diverse talent that you have recruited. So, talk a little bit about that for us, Elke.

Elke Flores Suber ([00:24:12](#)):

Absolutely. So, as a lawyer, that's my profession. So, I sit within what is the legal department, various iterations. Today, it's corporate, external and legal affairs. But I can remember joining Microsoft 15 years ago and I was the fourth African-American black woman lawyer hired in the entire legal department. And at the time, the department was probably 700 people, and so you can imagine that I could go months without seeing another person that looked like me. Today, you're going to have companies that are being built with diversity in mind when they formed a company. A lot of the companies that exist today weren't built with that. So, it's a muscle that they've had to move, and change, and build on.

Elke Flores Suber ([00:25:07](#)):

And the department that I've been in, that's a journey that we started in earnest, I would say, we had the early beginnings in the early 2000s, when I joined 2005, by 2007, we really had the support of senior leadership to focus on diversity and inclusion. And that is probably one of the most critical things, because it really has to be almost like a two-way street. You want to have, of course, your employees that care about it, but you need to have a tone from the top that diversity, equity and inclusion is important to the company, and also something that you want to drive culture change in the company.

Elke Flores Suber ([00:25:44](#)):

And from then to now, 15 years later, I'm really proud to say that I think Microsoft is out in front of these issues in a way that we weren't 15 years ago. The growth even internally of the importance of where our leader for D&I sits in the organization, the importance of supporting employee network, we call them employee resource groups or employee networks, all of those things are critically important. But one of the other key points is for leadership of every organization to have a focus on your diverse talent. Because again, we're in organizations where diversity wasn't at the forefront, so what are you doing to address and ensure that you have diverse hiring slates, that you have diverse interview loops, so that everyone has an opportunity to have full talent and diverse talent in the organization?

Elke Flores Suber ([00:26:43](#)):

So, it's been a journey, and I think that's just critically important for every leader and manager in a company to be committed to, and again, saying, I could see our company, having gone through that journey. And our department was probably out in front of this, and certainly, with the change in leadership, when Satya came in, the growth mindset, the commitment to diversity, that's been really critical. And it's great to see a change, and it's happening across my industry. There's still a lot of work to do, but we're making progress. And like Khadijah said, diversity, equity, inclusion issues, they're not going to go away, but they do need to be focused on and we need companies to be committed to that.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:27:26](#)):

It's so funny. I'm thinking in 2005, if you all had that small number, I might have known every black attorney at Microsoft then, if I think about you, Bruce-

Elke Flores Suber ([00:27:35](#)):

You probably did.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:27:36](#)):

I probably did, right?

Elke Flores Suber ([00:27:37](#)):

Yeah. The department would have an annual meeting where they brought all of the lawyers in, and all of the paralegals and business professionals from around the country, and the African-Americans and Blacks in the department in 2006, we could fit around one table at a restaurant. It was less than 10 of us in the entire department. I am proud to say that is not the case today, I can't even tell you how many we are, but diversity begets diversity, and that small group and the investment then made a change.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:28:09](#)):

Wow. So, let's talk about those 15 years, Elke, because there are people who are now retiring from there that I feel like I know. So I know, Neil, I just saw on LinkedIn that he retired, and he's someone who was a sponsor, African-American, he was a deputy GC at the time of his retirement. And you've had different managers throughout the time that I've known you, but you've had some interesting jobs. Every time you were like, "I got moved. I'm doing something different." And you've been able to travel all over the world. I remember when you were going back and forth to China, you've done retail side, you've done in-house. So, talk a little bit about those transitions, why you decided to make those

changes, and how you think that helped you when the time ultimately came for them to say, "We're going to pull Elke in and make her a partner"? That's a big deal. How many other African-American women are sitting at that partner level right now at Microsoft, and talk about your journey there?

Elke Flores Suber ([00:29:05](#)):

Sure. I'll talk about how many are sitting. I don't have exact numbers. I can tell you within our legal department, we went from one to three over the last three years, so we're moving forward. And that was a table that we were not at for the duration of the history of the company until three years ago. So, that's been an incredible journey. As a company all up, there are probably 40... what we call the partner level, there are probably 40 plus of us in the company. So, it is a very small group of folks. Probably 50 to 40% of those are Black women. And again, I'm speaking about the Black women partner community at Microsoft. I don't have exact numbers. I'm going off the top of my head, so don't quote me on that. But it's been a journey, certainly. You've probably seen that number, for us internally, grow in the last, I would say 10 years, right? Because again, the culture changed, the ability to have broader investment in talent and inclusion of diverse talent in that investment. Because remember, we're talking about people who are at the top of their game anyway.

Elke Flores Suber ([00:30:24](#)):

And with respect to my transitions at Microsoft, I actually came into the company as a specialist lawyer. So, for those of you who know or are familiar with the legal profession, I was a copyright. My area of focus was copyright law, intellectual property, and I loved it, and I loved being a specialist, and I really enjoyed it. But the more I supported the product teams as their copyright lawyer, I was like, "I think I could do that job too." And so, when I heard Khadijah talk about, "What else do I want to do? What other impact can I make?" Those were the sort of early conversations, and I think you have those at every stage of your career.

Elke Flores Suber ([00:31:03](#)):

Back when I was an attorney in the company, I wasn't looking to be a DGC, I was looking to become a senior attorney, and how could I expand my experience? So, moving out of the specialist role, I then went into what we call being a product group attorney, and I represented products like... Oh, some of them don't even exist anymore. But I was the lead lawyer for Messenger, which then we had an acquisition of Skype and the two businesses merged. I managed the legal team for Hotmail, for example, I know Hotmail is still around, and some of our early consumer products, and had an opportunity then to go into being a manager. Really enjoyed that, but as those businesses sort of expanded and contracted, I thought about, "Well, what's next?" And I took a lateral move into the retail space.

Elke Flores Suber ([00:31:55](#)):

So, it's really important as you are on this career journey, not every move is going to be a promotion to the next level, some of them will be lateral moves, and the move to retail allowed me to do a couple of things. Take my copyright experience, take my engineering, product, group support experience and bring it to the space of retail, where at the time, the company was launching both its online retail business and its physical stores. So, I had an opportunity there to, not just... in my prior role, I was supporting existing businesses that were already in global markets, with store, I got to help support the launch of opening stores across the US, opening stores in Europe, and in Asia, particularly with a focus

on China. That was incredible. And in that role, had the transition in role as the manager of our team moved on, then to be promoted to the leadership of the team.

Elke Flores Suber ([00:32:55](#)):

And so, a promotion in role, in the same org, where, as Khadijah talked about, I had those lateral peer relationships, well, now I became the manager. So, that was an interesting thing as well, because I had all the relationships, but also was in a situation where, "Okay, wow, now I'm in a different level from everyone else in the group. How do I manage that? How do they manage that?" And then the last two roles, I've been very blessed because they've both been leadership roles. Moved from leading just a store team to managing Microsoft's consumer device business, our Microsoft advertising business, as well as store. So then, again, stepping up from a single team, managing across three teams. And today, my role is managing Microsoft's Global Partner Business, so four different businesses, managing the global legal team for those businesses around the world.

Elke Flores Suber ([00:33:53](#)):

But each role allowed me to learn something new to expand. And people say, "Oh, my goodness, you've been at Microsoft four years," but I've had five different jobs, right? So, it's given me an opportunity to continue to grow due to the size of our legal department and the scope of the business.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:34:11](#)):

So, Khadijah, I do want to talk about... because again, I tell how we met you, you were at Nickelodeon. And a lot of people didn't realize... if you don't listen to these things, you don't realize that the Viacom family's been huge for some time, and they bought a lot of things. And you seemed to figure out, in the middle of their buying spree, how to move within the organization, and most importantly, one of the things I always noticed, and I think Elke and I were talking about it the other day, you always have Viacom on your signature, and you had relationships across Viacom. And so we would meet some people, and they would only have BT, but I think you were consistent in that for a reason. I think that was actually very smart of you as well as you went through.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:34:54](#)):

But talk about your transition from Nickelodeon, then through Viacom, and then when they got new businesses, and then you even ended up managing people who you knew, who were friends, right, because then now you had a lot of the peer management issues that Elke talks about.

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:35:10](#)):

Yeah. Right, I started out in Nickelodeon. It was so funny, because actually, even under Nickelodeon, there was so many businesses. So, there was like, I worked on Nick at Nite, I worked on TV Land, I helped to launch Spike TV, which became the Paramount Network, I did a lot of Nick Jr. work, and Noggin work. So, what's interesting was all these other businesses that we had underneath Nickelodeon that allowed me to really kind of meet a lot of people, expand my breadth, and then also figure out where the opportunities were for growth, right? Like, "Oh, maybe I could do that." Like Elke said, "Maybe I could do that. Who else should I know?"

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:35:46](#)):

And then a good friend, as you know, a good friend of mine, George Cheeks, who became... he was actually the person who trained me, him and Rhonda Medina, early on, they would sit with me and teach me all the stuff I need to know early in my career, they poured everything into me, I would just say basically, really, really wonderful mentors at the beginning and even to this day.

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:36:07](#)):

And what happened is, George moved over to MTV, which was also under the Viacom umbrella, and he became the general counsel for MTV, VH1, all those properties, and then I actually was thinking about a transition and what else I wanted to do next, and he said, "You know what, you should go run the New York office for BET." And I was like, "Really?" And he was like, "Yeah. There's some new things that's going to be coming down, and I can see you helping them transition."

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:36:33](#)):

And so that was actually an opportunity for me to stretch myself even more because I went from kids programming, to music programming, but we weren't trying to stay in music, apparently. The goal was for me to help them get out of music, per se, day to day, and get into scripted, and non scripted, and documentaries, and news again, and all these other things they wanted to do differently. So, that was actually a really interesting thing for me as well. It allowed me to cut my teeth on production every day with 106 & Park, shows like that, it allowed me to work on documentaries and real hard news programs with some of the folks in that area. I got to do day to day planning for regular shows that you would see on the scripted side, but I also got to do a lot of tip polls and special events like the BET awards. I got to bring the show Black Girls Rock to our network back then. So, there was a lot of different things I got to do, so it was that variety that really attracted me.

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:37:29](#)):

And then, as you said, Emily, I did have the same issue that Elke had when you're friends with people, you're all on the same level, and then you become their managers, and you have to figure out how to navigate them. I think it's a tricky thing, but I think it works when you have real transparent conversations, and if you're authentic about how you intend to lead. People trust you, I think, when you're upfront about what the expectations are, let's put it that way, and what you can expect of them, what they can expect of you. And it actually worked out for the most part.

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:38:01](#)):

There were a couple of people, I think sometimes, that have challenges with somebody who was once their peer leading them, but I think most people, if you are in a place where you have a meeting of the minds about how this is going to go down and what is expected of everybody, and people play their roles. I'm never interested in having people be small. I want people to get big. I don't want to make myself reduced to some small thing that makes somebody else feel good, so I don't want them to do it for me either. I want everybody to be big about what they want to do. And I'm always encouraging people to figure out what's their next big step.

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:38:35](#)):

So, for me, my first discussion with folks, even with the people on my team now it's like, "What do you want to do? What's your two-year plan, three-year plan, five-year plan? How can I help you get there?" Because otherwise, this is like, if you're not going to be happy and thinking about growth, then this might not really work that well with me because I'm always thinking about growth, I'm thinking about my next steps as well. So, I try to encourage people to do that as well in all of the relationships that I've built with them. And sometimes I lose good people because I'm trying to get them to their next place, and that's okay too.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:39:05](#)):

Yeah. And I think it's okay because you never know when they'll come back, and then they're going on to do things, and you can pick up the phone and get what you need from them in that new space, right?

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:39:14](#)):

That's right.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:39:17](#)):

I always talk about making your net work and continue to make it work for you. You got to continue to feed it and sometimes you got to let people go. And I'm actually excited, someone that used to work for me when I was an assistant VP is now coming to work for me at SHRM, he starts next week, and I'm so excited because he's grown. But we've managed to stay in touch, and I know this is a great next move for him, and I'm so psyched that I get to give them that next move. And I know each of you talk about that. Each of you have mentioned something that I don't want to gloss over, because it must have been my first SHRM conference, it was Father's Day weekend, I had just lost my dad and I wrote this thing about being so mentored and sponsored by men, and that I felt he was my first sponsor, my first mentor.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:40:04](#)):

And for both of you, I know men... and I actually have this term called male manager made, because I've had more male managers throughout my career than I've had female managers, and I don't know. The direct New Yorker in me is okay with that. I'm a sports' girl, I can have these discussions, and I felt comfortable in those environments, but talk to me. Each of you, I know, has had a male sponsor who has taken you under their wing and helped you throughout the relationships and throughout all of the transitions that you had in these long term careers in these organizations. If you had to give someone just your top three tips about nurturing those relationships, maintaining those relationships, the importance of those relationships, what would you say?

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:40:50](#)):

I'll let you go first, Elke, since I just [inaudible 00:40:53].

Elke Flores Suber ([00:40:53](#)):

Okay, Khadijah. You're so polite. As you were speaking, Emily, I think the first thing that came to mind is the respect. Now, when I say that, I don't mean it as in like this hierarchy respect thing, I mean respect like you would have for a friend, right? So, if you're friends with someone, you'll reach out to them,

you'll check in on them, if you see something of interest to them, you're going to follow up with them and share it.

Elke Flores Suber ([00:41:27](#)):

And I think when you're in a mentee-mentor relationship, whenever someone sponsors you, usually, you've been mentee-mentor first, and I think it's respecting the relationship and building, and also you as the mentee, putting into that relationship, right, celebrating your mentor's wins, sharing things that your mentor may not have visibility to, and investing in your mentor. And I think sometimes people forget that step, so that would be most important thing I would say is step one.

Elke Flores Suber ([00:42:00](#)):

Step two is, if you're looking into a relationship, a lot of times people don't even tell you when they're your sponsor. It's so funny, because a lot of times in companies you'll hear people say, "Well, you need a mentor and you need a sponsor." You don't really go to someone and say, "Hey, can you be my sponsor?" Mentor, absolutely, but a sponsor can show up in many different ways. And so again, I think the second thing I would share is, how are you investing in who you are and how you show up?

Elke Flores Suber ([00:42:33](#)):

I love what Khadijah said earlier on. If you leave a situation, are you leaving it as well as you showed up when you first got the situation, right? Whenever we have a new situation, we're giving it our all, but are you being that consistent person that is reliable, someone that's a team player, someone that's collaborative? Those are the things that I think help... at least in my scenario, I know has been a contributing factor from building what might have been just a mentor-mentee relationship into, "I'm going to invest in Elke, I'm going to sponsor her." So, that would be the second thing.

Elke Flores Suber ([00:43:09](#)):

And then I think the third thing is making sure you invest into your sponsor, making sure that you understand that if someone is sponsoring you and they're speaking up for you in the room, they are putting some capital behind you. Protect that capital. Be thoughtful about the fact that they have spoken up in a positive way on your behalf and honor that. Those are the three things I would think of.

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:43:41](#)):

I think it is funny because I was going to say, two of them, I agree with completely, and actually, all of them I agree with, but I'm just going to add one. So, I think that Elke is right. I think there's a couple of things that people oftentimes get wrong on the sponsorship front, and even on the mentorship front, quite frankly.

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:43:58](#)):

The thing that I have recognized is that people sometimes come to folks when they only need stuff, right? So, it's like, "Oh, can you help me?" "What do you need?" How about just, "Hey, Khadijah, how's it going?" Or, "Hey, Elke. Hey, Emily. Just want to check in on you." Right? "How is such and such?" or "This is an article, to your point, that I came across. Are you interested in such as such? This might be of interest to you too." So, small things like that.

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:44:21](#)):

I think it's sort of the soft skills that people don't always get as opposed to like, "Can you look at my resume?" That's fine, of course, right? "Can you tell me if you know such and such at this company? I want to get in." But it's also just the simple little things of just the human relations piece of it, I think that's really important. And I think just staying connected on the human level is important.

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:44:41](#)):

The other thing I would say is that people sometimes also don't use time wisely. So, if you know the person is sponsoring or mentoring you and they're really busy, be specific about what you're looking for. Know what you want, right? So, sometimes I'll ask people, they'll say, "Can you be my mentor?" I'm like, "Okay, sure. So, how can I best mentor you?" "I don't know. I just wanted you to be my mentor." I'm like, "Okay." So, I mean, if there's something in particular that I am doing that you want to do, tell me what that is. So, I think that being specific is really key and really important as well.

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:45:10](#)):

And I think Elke's point, which is her last point in terms of people using their social capital on your behalf is super critical, because you don't have a lot of chips, right, where we sit, oftentimes. You got to use your chips wisely. So, if I'm using a chip for someone that I believe is going to show up the way that they need to show up to be super successful, that's important. And I know most of the people who've used their chips for Elke, and I, and Emily, they're not using their chips for everybody, let's just be clear, they're just not going to do it, right?

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:45:42](#)):

I was talking to someone the other day, and they were like, "How are you doing? How's your new job?" I said, "Listen, I am working hard, really, really hard for me and for you, because I know you showed up for me," right? So, this is for real, right? I don't want to embarrass you and I don't want to embarrass me. And it doesn't go away. People are still sponsoring us, right? So, I want to make sure that they know that when they put their name on the line, and they were my referrals and my references, that those people can say, "Yeah, I sent this person to you, and this person is showing up properly." So, I'm still in that same space where I'm trying to make sure I'm living up to this, so I expect other people to do the same thing.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:46:15](#)):

The other piece you all talked about, mentors, you're right, Khadijah. I get notes from people on LinkedIn, "I'm looking for a mentor." I'm like, "You don't even know... I appreciate that you think I can add some value." But as I was talking to my coach, we came up with this thing that really works for me.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:46:30](#)):

I am a passive mentor, so I don't have the time. I know my limitations, so I know a really good mentorship relationship that's an active one is that you got to set aside time for them. So, I say, "Look, I'm happy being a passive mentor, which means I've got to be on my game at all times, because hopefully, you'll see something I'm doing and copy it. If you think it's something great, feel free to use it, but I can't give you that time. Now, I will find you somebody who can be the active person, but feel free to take anything that you can learn from my successes and my mistakes and use those."

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:47:08](#)):

And so I think that's really critical, because a lot of people will ask you that and not realize the amount of time, and just at some stages in your life, as we all say, you got to know when to say no, you got to know your limitations. I know my limitations. I don't want to say yes to an active mentorship and then I can't really fulfill it, because then they'll really talking about you like, "She said she was going to do this and she didn't do it." And you know I don't like that.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:47:30](#)):

So, look, you all talked about leaving as good as you came in, and we talk about it... at SHRM we talk about red carpet in, red carpet out in terms of treating our people as they come in, but you're right. I think employees have got to understand that when you say you're going to leave an organization, that there's a way to leave it, and it gets me when people leave and they leave a bad taste in people's mouths in the manner in which they've left an organization.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:47:59](#)):

So, I would love to give some best practice tips to people who are transitioning out of organizations, because we've seen a lot... I don't know if you all have this. I keep hearing and reading bonus time comes, once a bonus checks are cut, you know you're going to lose two or 3% of the population. So, I wasn't ready for all of that, but now you know what it is too, right? But even then, it is how you lead. So, how about you give more than six days notice, right? You give the full notice.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:48:34](#)):

I don't want people to continue to make those mistakes because they are thinking I know at that point, of doing what they need to do for the new employer, but because relationships are so important, and the world is so small, and you never know when you might need that relationship again, talk to me about... Khadijah, as you were leaving, how did you make sure you smoothed away? I know you can pick up the phone and call anyone over there. And then Elke, as you've seen employees leave, what are some of... let's just be real and talk about some of the bad things people have done and how they could have done it differently. So, Khadijah, we'll start with you.

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:49:10](#)):

Okay, great. First and foremost, the truth is that when you're looking for other jobs or other opportunities, you know you're going to leave at some point, right? So, even if you don't give people notice a month in advance, you should be prepping as if you are doing all that they're going to ask you about before you even get to that conversation.

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:49:29](#)):

So, for me, right, I was like okay, at least a month notice to say, "Okay, I need to start making sure that everything is tightened up and buttoned up, and that my team is on point, and if I left here today, they would be okay." So, I gave at least two weeks notice, and even close to three, to be honest, and to say, "You know what, these are things that have to happen." And even told my current employer, "Look, I can't go before because I have to make sure that they're taken care of."

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:49:57](#)):

I think that's important too because it says to your new employee, let's say, that this person cares enough about how they're going to exit a place, not just how you come in, but how you exit the place, so that they recognize I would do the same thing for them, right? I'm trying to make sure that, not only do we have good relationships still, but that people can call me afterwards if there are questions, that there's a status report that's written that's comprehensive, that I've done all that I can do to close all the deals or to tighten everything up on the business side so that people don't feel as if I just walked away and was like, "They'll figure it out." That's just not acceptable, because our reputations will live on well past us leaving those companies, right? And usually, sometimes people still get blamed for stuff that they leave, but the point is that you want to be able to have people say, "She worked really hard to the end."

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:50:47](#)):

My last day that I worked at this company, I closed a big deal. I was still working hard to the very end, I wanted that last deal to mean something. I wanted people to know that I never gave up on doing the best just because I decided to do something different at that point. And to this day, the General Counsel and people will still call me, they're like, "Hey, I'm just checking in on you. How's it going?" Right? From my previous company, because I did want them to know that I cared about them, and I cared about their business still, and I really still value the relationships that I built over those 25 years. So, I think it's super critical.

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:51:17](#)):

I think the one thing I would say also is, as we're thinking about making transitions, think about the process. You have to start to mentally get yourself prepared for the process of even leaving one job and getting to the other, because things can linger for a while, but you do have to, at some point, have a cut off mark so you can get fully into that new job, but you still will accept people's questions and those kinds of things. I read the book, *The First 90 Days* and I was like, "Okay, yeah, I need to figure out, what's my next big thing I need to be doing? I need to make sure I'm in that mode, that mindset for that next job."

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:51:55](#)):

I love that book. Someone gave me that book when I went to AGB, and it is amazing and it has such great tips in it, because yes, you do. At some point, you got to cut the chord, right? You don't cut the relationships, but it is, you got to make sure that those big projects that they come to some kind of natural close so that people aren't left hanging.

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:52:14](#)):

That's right.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:52:15](#)):

So, Elke, I've probably called you and talked about people leaving and I just don't understand why they left the way they left, right? And you feel bad, especially when it's people that you have fed into, and you would think that one of the things they'll do is give you some heads up that they're looking, because I love nothing more than being able to move people within an organization. But if I didn't know you

wanted to be moved, I can't help you. So, talk to me about some of the things that you've seen that just made you shake your head, and how can we do better? How can we give some good advice for those out there?

Elke Flores Suber ([00:52:50](#)):

Absolutely. And the other thing I'll also add is, people transition internally at a company, and so you should be thinking about even your internal transitions. Are you treating them with the same level of respect that Khadijah talked about? So, we'll get to that. But yes, have I seen people leave in just crazy? I mean, maybe I shouldn't call it crazy, but yes, I have.

Elke Flores Suber ([00:53:13](#)):

Again, I think relationships, relationships, relationships. This is your capital in your work environment. And I have seen people have a great relationship, but for whatever reason, maybe they were nervous, maybe they were... It's usually not you, it's them, as to why they've made a decision, but I think leaving without sufficient notice is definitely one of the top things that we've seen people do.

Elke Flores Suber ([00:53:45](#)):

Now, you knew you were leaving, do some of the things Khadijah talked about. So, even if you left with a week's notice, if everything was tied up, there was the transition memo written, everyone could find everything they needed to work on, that's a different thing, right? So, I think leaving without really taking the time to be thoughtful of, not just your manager, but your peers, because most times when you leave a role, it is your peers that will pick up the work that you leave behind, as well as your manager. So, those are some of the things that I've seen.

Elke Flores Suber ([00:54:23](#)):

We've all heard the saying, sometimes people leave roles, not because they don't like the company, sometimes people are leaving roles because they don't like their manager. Well, once again, even if that's the case, being respectful of the relationships that you have... I've seen people leave the company or leave a role and they're bad talking the team, they're bad talking prior management, all of those things, unfortunately, usually have a way of coming back to bite you, and it is something that I think people have to be thoughtful about.

Elke Flores Suber ([00:54:57](#)):

Even if you're leaving a situation that feels really bad to you, think about who are those close people that you can talk to outside of the workplace that will keep your confidences. Be thoughtful about what you share when you're having a difficult situation at work and you're transitioning out of a role. Because again, if you stay with the company and you've gone to another team, some of that can follow you. If you're leaving the company, again, we don't always know who has relationships. So, to me, those are the two big ones I think, I would just stick with those two big ones. Not sort of giving enough notice, leaving with no transition plan ready, being thoughtful about the people who have to pick up your work, and then yeah, maybe you were in a bad situation, but how did you manage that on your way out?

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:55:49](#)):

Yeah. We did some cultural work last year, yeah, we've been doing it actually, for the last couple of years, and I'll tell you, you're right. A lot of people say they leave, not because they don't like the organization, because they don't like their manager, right? But there are people we don't like every day, right? You're not going to like everybody. Respect the position and have some conversations about your situation. I think people will respect that. And maybe if they don't, maybe you have a manager who's just not a nice person, that happens too, but sometimes you got to just always take the higher ground, because I'm with you. If you leave and you leave your peers in alert, one day that peer could be your boss or be someone that's a hiring manager and you're like, "No, because that person left us out there, and then I know they're not a good teammate. And so, no, I wouldn't come in and bring them in."

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:56:39](#)):

I've got a few more minutes. One of the questions the team wanted us to talk about a little bit was about salary negotiations, and then if we have a chance, a quick tidbit on work-life integration. When I was talking about it, I was like, "Oh, this is such a diverse panel, right?" And then you get people look you like, "Huh." It is, right? I've got a divorced mother of two in Elke, I've got the mom of two, with the husband who's a CEO too, in Khadijah, and then I tell people, my husband and I are just two kids, it's just the two of us, and we just make it happen. But we both have older parents too, and so there is this thing where if I've got to go to New York to take care of my mom, I know my boss would be supportive of that. I do want to talk about that.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:57:31](#)):

But talk about having those discussions about negotiations, because I tell you, I have seen some doozies, and I tell people, don't forget that at this level, it's more than just the salary. It is what's the rest of the package? I can't tell people that enough, to ask all the questions about the package. And I'm almost embarrassed to say, the one thing I didn't ask about when I came to SHRM was leave. So, I'm sitting here trying to figure out like, "Oh, it's 20 days," not realizing the executives had open leave when we got here and I still don't know what to do with that. But I know you got to ask some questions.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([00:58:07](#)):

So, Khadijah, talk to us about what's the number one thing you tell people about salary negotiation? And then I'll ask Elke, what's the number one thing? And then let's talk about the work-life integration, what's that number one thing there?

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:58:20](#)):

It's not just about the physical dollars and cents, it's also about how much time do you have? What's the stock, right? [inaudible 00:58:28]? Are there options? Are they grants? When do they invest? What are the things that you know are in the package? Is there a signing bonus? You All these things that... And it's funny, because recently, when I was doing my own negotiation, somebody said to me, "Khadijah, don't forget..." And this is another gentleman mentor of mine, he said to me, "Don't forget to ask for these other things too." And I'm like, "Yes. Right." And so sometimes you negotiate all the day, we can negotiate all the time, but I didn't think about some of the other things and he was like, "Don't forget about this, and don't forget about that."

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:58:59](#)):

So, I would say that, the first thing that we have to do is not be afraid to ask other people for advice, right? Because we open ourselves up and be a little bit vulnerable helps us actually ask the right kinds of questions. And sometimes we don't always have the answers, and the things that I didn't think about to ask for, [inaudible 00:59:15] said, "Well, don't get caught up on this. If they can't do that, ask them to do this." So, it's not just about the no, it's about, "However, can you do this instead?" So, I always think about the alternatives, and I think that's the big thing that I learned. And I learned that from a dear friend many years ago, he was like, "Don't get caught up on this. If they can't do this, see if they can do that." So, I think that's really important.

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([00:59:36](#)):

And I think we as women, have to get super comfortable, and if we're not comfortable, if you have to grince and ask for it, pinch yourself, call a friend like you two did when you were talking about salary stuff, figure out how you come to that place where you recognize that we're leaving money on the table if we don't ask. I started to put my kids in it, and I was like, "My kids are starving now," not literally, but you know what I'm saying. I was like, "This is affecting my children. My children have to eat. I got tuition to pay." So, it's all these things you have to start to say, "It's not just us, it's our families, it's sort of really about a collective of negotiation that we're really having." So, that's what I started to do to help myself actually.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([01:00:15](#)):

All right. Elke.

Elke Flores Suber ([01:00:16](#)):

That is fantastic advice, and I think when you have to put your family first, and when you are the sole breadwinner for your family, you act differently. I did think about, I was much more comfortable negotiating multimillion dollar deals for my boss than I ever was negotiating my own salary. And so I love Khadijah's point about pinching yourself, about pushing yourself. And here's the other thing. Do your own research. Do you understand what the market will bear? You've got to ask for advice, but you've also got to do some of your own research, you've got to understand what are the different things that you could have in a salary negotiation. And I love the piece Khadijah noted about the alternatives.

Elke Flores Suber ([01:01:06](#)):

My first job out, I didn't ask for anything. They gave me the offer and I was like, "Woo hoo." But I would not recommend that to anyone, even if it is your first job. Even if you just ask for a little bit more, you get yourself into that motion of really understanding that you do have... that is the time you have negotiation power, when you first get that new job. So, I think that's critically important, and it's understanding what the market will bear, as Khadijah said, asking for advice, but knowing what the different packages are.

Elke Flores Suber ([01:01:39](#)):

I just had someone that I mentor, and she was looking at two different job offers, and I had to remind her to say, "Hey, does the second job offer stock, because otherwise, the salary might be higher in job B, but if you have no stock with job B, then your overall package will be less, right?" So again, doing those tick and ties between the differences.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([01:02:04](#)):

Yeah. I learned about the risk, right? So, the lower risk is you got the high salary but the lower bonus potential, or is it do you go for the lower salary but the higher bonus potential? And the issue I tell people is, are you going to bet on yourself? If you trust the organization, and you bet on yourself, and you can end up with a higher bonus, maybe that lower base salary works for you in that situation. And actually, the person who told me to bet on myself was my husband when I was kind of looking at an offer, and he was like, "You don't think you can get bonus?" And so again, someone who you trust who said, "You can really do it."

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([01:02:43](#)):

Look, I'm going to get cut off soon, so I need one word... and I knew we were going to go long because we don't get to do this so often, and I just feel really blessed right now to have the opportunity to spend this time and for you all to share your knowledge. And I joke about it sometimes, but as a law student, seeing the two of you on the stage at ABA events, at BESLA events, was absolutely what I needed to see, because I don't question whether I can be in these spaces and do these spaces. You all were there and you were trailblazing through those spaces in corporate America and even in your... I haven't even talked about all the work you all do as volunteers in nonprofits and leadership there, you are doing it all, and I couldn't have had better examples.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([01:03:31](#)):

So, if you had one word to talk about how you do it all, what's the word that really centers you and helps you to understand that you got to do this work stuff, got to do this life stuff, got to do home stuff, what is it for you? What is it for you, Khadijah?

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([01:03:47](#)):

I think it's purpose. I would just say I let my life be governed by purpose. I'm trying to understand like, what is it that I'm here to do? And sometimes it's the things we do at work, but sometimes it's oftentimes the things that we do just in our lives, our everyday lives, and I'm driven by having a real purpose driven life, honestly, and figuring out how do I get to that next thing. I have a list of things I need to do and sometimes I don't feel like I have enough hours in the day to accomplish it, but I do know that the things that I choose to do and the things that I'm intentional about doing are things that I believe that I can make an impact in those spaces, I care about deeply, and more importantly, I want to make sure that I'm touching other people, that they feel as if... if they knew me in some way, that they felt like I made some difference in their lives in some way.

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([01:04:32](#)):

So, that's really been my big thing, whether it be mentorship, or sponsorship, or just even a kind word. Sometimes it's not just about the donations and stuff or the charitable giving, it's really about how do you connect with people and how do you help people realize their dreams? Because that's my big thing. If I can do one thing in this life, it's really about how can I tap into somebody else to help them see the spark that they may not have kindled as brightly just yet but that is yet to be fully aflame? So, that's my big thing and purpose.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([01:05:00](#)):

Elke.

Elke Flores Suber ([01:05:01](#)):

Really, I have to follow that?

Khadijah Sharif-Drinkard ([01:05:02](#)):

You're so crazy, girl.

Elke Flores Suber ([01:05:04](#)):

No, I love it. I think for me it's... Stephen Covey had a book, First Things First, and I love that saying, but it really aligns with what Khadijah is talking about, right? What are the things that are most important to you in your life? And for me, right, it ties right into purpose. For me, it's my family. Why am I at work? Yes, I enjoy work, but I'm also at work because I want my kids to have the things and the opportunities so that they can build a good life. I want to be able to help my family, my mom, whatever the case may be, right? So, first things first, family is first for me.

Elke Flores Suber ([01:05:40](#)):

But I love what I do as well, and so how am I making an impact there? And for me, it goes back to how can I invest in others the way that people invested in me? How can I be that example as I saw examples in front of me that said, "Hey, this kid from Brooklyn that's going to inner city public high school can be a lawyer one day"? And honestly, that was just the beginning of the dream. I didn't even think about like, what would a career in corporate America look like at that time? But for me it's, how am I giving back and investing in others and how am I spending time and putting my family first? So, first things first.

Emily M. Dickens, J.D. ([01:06:20](#)):

Well, I will say you both have been really successful at that because you just allow other people to see a way. And I'll say to anyone, no matter where you work, what industry, that I think there's something you get from this discussion and from these experiences of these two amazing women that I get to call friends. And so it couldn't be a better ending for me to International Women's Day. We're going to celebrate all of March, but I'm really proud that I got a chance to share you both with the SHRM family, with the BESLA family, and with anyone else who's out here who's looking at this today. So, thank you both, again, and for the rest of the room, we'll see you next month for Tune in Tuesday.