**Events and Hosting**

**10.05.2018**

Z works as a journalist with X News as a TV and radio presenter specialising in technology (main), business and global news. She is based in London and Southampton for 3 days per week. She is a single mother with 2 children (aged 4 and 6), with some support from her ex-partner.

CG So please tell me about your activities.

XX: I do after dinner speaking, voice overs, conference hosting and / or chairing / moderating, that kind of thing.

CG: And how often do you find you do that?

XX: Probably one every month, but then sometimes there will be loads and I’ll do a couple in the month. It’s sporadic.

CG: When did you start doing that?

XX: For few years now, but it has really taken off in the last 2. So probably since 2014.

CG: And so if that post having children?

XX: Yes.

CG: What was it that kicked off you undertaking these additional activities?

XX: Well it was a number of things I suppose. First off I am a member of staff at the X and that pays me a reasonable salary, but not a great one, and I wanted to earn some extra money. With being a broadcasters you get the reputation and profile for being able to do this sort of thing. The work just started coming my way, so I was asked to do a few things here and there and then you know, you do something and you know wherever you are, someone else comes up to you and asks “do you do this and could you do this for us”. Then what you do gets extended, all through word of mouth. I haven’t had to push hard at it. But then having said that, it’s not my primary income and its supplementary money for me, so yeah I am not pushing it, I don’t have to push it hard.

I am doing a 2 day conference next week for the National Housing Federation, which came up as a result of them emailing me. Yes it has been really organic.

CG: What does it involve?

XX; Well it’s a range really. This particular one it’s two whole days with a mixture of chairing panels, welcoming guests, signposting people to you know… “go over there to have your lunch”. It’s an interesting role, because you are the face of it, you are facilitating rather than presenting so your aim is to try and say as little as possible. As a journalist and a presenter I always feel like, it’s the person telling the story you want to hear. It’s their story and not mine and my job is to make sure you can tell it in the best possible way and it’s not my job to tell you about me. That works well for this sort of work.

Do you know what is really interesting, once you start doing it, nobody asks you questions about yourself anyway. People just don’t, they get used to you being in that role and then they don’t ask. Anyway it this sort of work, it works really well for me.

CG; How do you feel about the future, would you like to expand this more? Will it always be a supplementary income for you?

XX: It’s a difficult one that. I think the two roles that I now have are symbiotic. It’s having the X profile that has given me the access to this work. I don’t actually know if one would work without the other. And also, I do love working for the X. I feel very passionate about it. I have out up with a load of crap from them over the years, because I really believe in it and there isn’t really another broadcaster than I would want to work for.

So actually I can’t see it ever becoming my primary job, but it could become my primary income because it pays well, really well. So this 2 day event that I am doing next week, I am going to earn more in those 2 days than I earn in a month at the X.

Vastly different. And the more you do, the more you can command. It’s a very very lucrative thing to do.

CG; Well that’s great.

XX: It is. Also I am at the stage now where, Harley my youngest is starting school in September. So that is really going to change my time. At the moment, every couple of hours I have to be somewhere to get somebody and once they are both in the same place, at the same time for set period, I might be able to build more in.

CG: So therefore, have you found that as the children have grown you have gained more time to pursue possibilities more. Perhaps you will be able to fill that extra time with those “outside employment” income streams?

XX: I think my mind has been able to focus on it. I am 40 now and I had my children when I was 33 and 35 and so I felt like I had a window of opportunity and for those years, indeed the early years I concentrated on being a mum of small people. I wasn’t really thinking strategically about my career. I kept it going, but I wasn’t in that space to push myself. I didn’t feel like I had that capacity, that mental capacity to think about it all.

CG: So when you had that limited mental capacity with very young children, did you take on 100% of the home or domestic responsibilities? Was that also taking up your time?

CG: So women may get back clearer headspace when they have supportive domestic situations. That may help them jump back in sooner. I was wondering how that affected you.

XX: Well my husband and I are no longer together. He moved out about a year and a half ago. {-} It has always been amicable and we have always helped each other out. So yeah I have got good support from him and he has been as flexible as he can be. That definitely helped. And my mum has been tremendous.

CG; And so you have friends that you can pull in occasionally?

XX: Yeah I suppose sometimes, but I don’t like to do that too much. I think asking friends too much creates difficulties.

CG: Over steps a mark?

XX; Yeah, you really have to choose your moments. But yes I am very lucky that there are friends and family I can call. Without that support network, well I definitely couldn’t do it. The thing with this work is, and now I am a single parent money is important, an issue? No not an issues, but I have to work and earn. I think what’s difficult with this extra work is that it’s not regular enough for me to say I need childcare every Wednesday. Yet I do need childcare some Wednesdays and there’s this scramble to find help at short notice.

This is why I am thinking about the au pair now. Because I am looking to earn more and build on these opportunities. This conference that I am doing, I am earning a lot. That would pay for an au pair for 6 months. That would really free me up.

CG; To provide some stability for you?

XX: Yes that’s exactly what I haven’t had. Every time I get this extra work…. I work Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays and my childcare organised and sorted. But if I pick up extra work on a Wednesday or Thursdays, that’s when the complications hit. Their dad works full time and he can’t cover the rest of a day after the half day at nursery. At school it is easier because Harrison has a great community of very local friends and we will all help each other out. But my youngest hasn’t got that yet and so it is much more difficult to place him.

My mum, bless her has really helped me out. But she is in her 70s and there are limits to what I can ask of her. And also sometimes it’s just short notice. That’s really difficult. Some of the extra work that I get at the X is short notice stand in presenting for various programmes. That’s often short notice because a presenter has called in sick. “Can I be in London in half an hour” Absolutely not. Yes I can but next Tuesday!

So yes it does limit you, unless of course you have a nanny. But they are so expensive. Chicken and egg, you have to be earning at that level to be able to pay for them in the first place.

CG; Yes, especially if you are trying to get a small business off the ground. That’s possibly where a partner can help.

XX: It’s really difficult and my new partner is in the navy, with the best will in the world, he would just not be available to help or be supportive. He is just not around very much. It’s not all that they don’t want, sometime they just can’t.

CG: You obviously have a support network, when you started with these new jobs, have you found that you have built your own business network too?

XX: Yes, massively.

CG: How has that come about?

XX; In my particular area, being a women in tech is unusual, not usual overall but there just aren’t that many women in tech. I am fortunate that I can avoid a lot of the crap that gets thrown at women. So you know I can be asked to chair a panel and it’s a panel full of men, it’s very obvious that the reason they have asked me to do it, is that I am a woman. But actually, nobody who has something to say is female. I just won’t do it. I have turned down work, a lot of money to do that sort of thing because I know what they are doing and it’s tokenism. I just won’t be a part of that. So I am able to skirt around that.

I think what’s interesting is that women talk about it all. So when I am chairing a panel or debate I always try and speak with everyone beforehand. Just so that we are not meeting for the first stage on stage in front of hundreds of people. What’s interesting is that the women will often bring up, I don’t bring it up because like I said I don’t want it to be about me, I’m friendly but I try and keep that distance, but the women say “Oh I can’t speak to you then because I have to do the school run.” They will bring their family life in and then I’ll say 2oh yes, me too” or whatever. But the men very rarely do and it really struck me that the family issues just aren’t there. They don’t think …. And today I was talking to one of my panel guests for next week, this guy… I phoned him at the right time and got his voicemail. He eventually phoned me back and said I am really sorry, I got to work and realised I had both car seats in the back of my car. So I had to drive home to pass them back”. And I said “Don’t worry, I totally understand, that’s my life.” But then I thought gosh, he is the only man, in the whole of my preparations that I have ever spoken to who has said anything about their family.

And yet with me I am very open about the fact that I can’t stay because I have to get back for my babysitter or I say, yes I’ll be able to come if I can get the childcare. I just say it.

CG: Yes from the research, we are looking at women setting up business after children and how that has shaped it. But for men they just set up a business and it doesn’t really feature.

XX: **Yes, I do sometime feel is the world actually changing or are we just taking on more?** Because with the best will in the world we still have to have the children. I used to joke with my ex-husband because he wanted more and I would say well go on them, you have them. It’s silly I know, but we still have to do it.

I remember once, I had a call from school because Harrison was poorly and could I come and get him and take him home. Well I was at work in Southampton. The X has an office in Southampton and I have to say they have been brilliant, fantastically flexible with me. So when I can I work down in Southampton. But R, his dad works in town so I said well I can come and get him, but I’m like right in the middle of work, and so I am at least half an hour’s drive away, let me see if I can just get hold of his dad as he is much closer. I phone R and keep on dialling, but he just doesn’t pick up. I wait 5 mins and see. But then OMG my child is ill and so of course I jump in the car to get him. So I got in the car, got to school, picked him up, back home, put on the TV, had a cuddle (he was fine really). But only then, at that point did Reece call me. Have you been trying to get hold of me?

But what was really interesting, was that when I called the school back, to say I couldn’t get hold of his dad so I was on my way from Southampton and might be a while. She said to me “That’s why we ring the mums dear”. And I thought hhhhmmmm. But it is true, we will pick up the phone and we will come.

CG: We know the school number and so pick up straight away.

XX: Yes I know, the number of times I have said to people, he has got 2 parents you know. And we are good friends me and my ex, there is no animosity. He finds it funny as well. He was like why didn’t they ring me? Well maybe you didn’t pick up?! I see that number and I am like (huge deep breadth) .

CG: and he doesn’t recognise that number.

XX: Nope. Probably not!

CG; obviously you have you local support network and your business network, do you have any mentors that have helped you? Did anyone help when you first started and now?

XX: Not officially. I have some friends who have been doing it a lot longer than I have. Actually one of them is quite a high profile TV presenter at the X. I know her for years and she really helped me. It was when R and I split up and I said I just need to earn more money. She was like, I know I can help you. She can command a terrific amount of money to do this stuff, because she is so high profile. She put me in touch with her agent, who hasn’t really helped me very much but having him as my agent has really helped me. Being able to tell people you have an agent and who that agent is gives you substance and credibility.

I can always say do you want to speak to my agent and or you can speak to me direct. They just deal me with direct which completely suits me. He and I have this arrangement where if it’s work I bring in I keep, and if it’s work he brings in, he charges a commission. So it’s very casual. It has helped me a lot, and it’s not the sort of contact you can easily get. I couldn’t just phone him up and ask, the only reason I got on his books was because I had a friend who is very well known and who helped me out.

There are women I know in this line of work and sometimes I do ask them, if I have something new I haven’t done before and they have, I’ll ask them how they did it, for advice.

CG: So would you say that high profile personality was quite key? Do you think you pursued these other avenues because she was doing it already? You saw that it was possible?

XX; Yes, I mean I have known about the work for years, but it’s just one of those things where it’s very difficult to get started. You need the profile to get started, and then you need to do it well. If you think about this thing I am doing on Monday, there are 300 people there and quite possibly half a dozen of them will be conference organisers and then quite possibly one or two or them will be organising a conference they want a female to lead, especially if it is related to technology.

CG: But you had to get your break first. So in a way did that first break come through female contacts or did you come organically, through your profile?

XX; In broadcasting there is this crazy thing where you have to have been on air to get on air. Nobody wants to put you on TV or radio, unless you have done it before. For a producer the last thing they want to someone who freezers unexpectedly. But at some point, somebody has to let you get on air. This is what is what has helped me a lot – being on TV and radio regularly gives you that massive boost in profile. People feel like they know you. And so that was probably the hardest bit, but I did that years ago and so I had already done that. It has taken time, I had two lots of maternity leave, both for 1 year, and you start at the bottom doing little bits here and there, it’s a slow burn.

To be honest I would not have had the confidence to just ditched my job and done this.

CG; Because it is so sporadic?

XX: Yes, but then again maybe it wouldn’t be if I devoted my time to looking for it, pushing it. It’s sporadic because somebody occasionally emails me, I am reactive.

CG: Would you say this locality here, are most of your connection here or London.

XX; Probably London is where my connections are and my mum is in London and I use to live there. **It would be my base if I didn’t have a family.**

CG: Do you feel a difference between here and London, because we are actually quite connected.

XX: It is a very different world and I like having two worlds. I think you eventually find your own level in a place, those that have similar values to you. I think there is a huge swathe of very conservative opinions here and it’s very white, not much diversity. Coming from London it is it is very different diversity wise. It is not the world. In my local school it is all white middle class. I mean most of my friends, that I love dearly, are not working mums, that is still a thing. There is a lot of wealth here that can be quite exclusive I imagine. But then I don’t know because I am not here all the time. I slot in and out quite happily.

CG: Last question, why so you think there are so few female entrepreneurs around?

XX: I think as we have discussed, as the childcare tends to fall to the woman, to be fair you tend to want to do it – that has an impact. I think women are less pushy. I discovered this, I hated and I still hate negotiating money, how much are to going to pay me. I am getting better at it now, but I hate it. I talk to a colleague at work (male 29), he is like “Just say what you want, I charge this much, there you go”. I am like (big gulp) “what” but actually you do have to do that. And with this gig I have now, we had the whole conversation about arrangement without discussing pay. It was another women, she said “We’d like to book” but no one had mentioned money. So I said, we do need to talk about money, my fee. I said what my normal rate for half a day, and she said will it be that then and I said, no because that is a half day (I have never done a full day). So she said, well I’ll have to speak to my boss. When she came back she offered me around 80% of the double rate, I could have haggled a bit more, but actually I was happy and I wouldn’t have got it up further if I hadn’t haggled initially and being very strong about it.

It’s the same with my step in presenting work. On a day I don’t week, I need childcare and train fare etc and I drafted a very apologetic email about how I am really sorry but I have these extra costs to cover and then I thought …. I have to channel Sherly (Sherly Sandberg Lean In) and so I just said “what is your presenter fee?”. No response and I thought I know I have blown it because you think everybody wants the presenters job. Why should they pay me then someone else could do it for free?

CG: In a way that sounds like such a female process … a man would be, that is my rate.

XX; Yes I know! Even when we are aware we are doing it, we still do it! Then I did hear from her again, and she was like please can you confirm you are available. Oh right, now she is just ignoring the pay thing and NOW I have to say it again. So I just replied “I was awaiting for you to confirm fees as it’s not a day I work” and then came back with a normal day rate, plus £100. I would never have got that if I hadn’t asked, or if I had just apologised. Suddenly there is an extra £100 every time I do this programme that I wouldn’t have known about.

I feel that is not fair, you should offer that. It’s a big job and I still think I am cheaper than a freelance presenter is. But there you go. Since January I have done around 20 extra programmes for this team, so that’s an extra £2,000 I would never have got if I hadn’t pushed. And that is something I think women don’t do well.

CG: Yes, X pay gender gap for many high profile female presenters!

XX: Yes for a woman to ask it is “bossy and overbearing” but for a male it is “assertive and alpha and it’s….yuck.”

**Personal Details**

Age: ~~16-29~~ 30-39 ~~40-49 50-59 60+~~

Nationality: British (white)

Country of origin: UK

Mode of working: ~~Full Time:~~ Part time: 2 days around a FT job

Children: (1) ~~0-2~~ 3-4 ~~5-11 12-18~~

Children: (2) ~~0-2 3-4~~ 5-11 ~~12-18~~

Children: (3) 0-2 3-4 5-11 12-18

Children: (4) 0-2 3-4 5-11 12-18

Highest educational qualification: Degree

Location of business: Winchester Alton Hampshire

Home working: No

Last position held in employment:

~~Husband Occupation~~: Single mum

~~Husband highest educational qualification~~:

Household income: ~~Dual~~ Single (Only her income)

2nd Question

I have a fairly simple answer to your question. When my husband and I separated I knew I had to earn a certain amount extra per month in order to carry on living pretty much the same lifestyle once he moved out. But I also knew I couldn't take on the regular commitment of extra hours with my employer because of children commitments. I am proud of the fact that I have managed to earn this extra amount almost every month in the 18 months since he moved out - to me that makes it a success!