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**With Your Host**

**Crystal Cooper**

Welcome to Net Worthwhile, Do More with Your Wealth, a podcast designed to explore financial topics from a broader perspective than just the numbers. We'll look at the emotional impact of financial decisions and how you can use your wealth to live a great life. Thank you for tuning in.

Crystal Cooper: And thank you again for joining us. We are here today with Dwayna Haley. She is the Senior Vice President at Porter Novelli. Thank you for joining Dwayna.

Dwayna Haley: Thank you for having me.

Crystal Cooper: Now, Dwayna is actually a very dear friend of mine, so I'm really excited to talk with her today. And as everybody probably knows at this point, we have a community called Signature executive, which caters to high level executives. So I thought her story would be really interesting to share because she is a high level executive. Dwayna, can you tell us a little bit about how you started your journey and what happened and all that good jazz?

Dwayna Haley: Yeah, absolutely. I graduated from college and immediately moved out to Los Angeles because I have generally grown up in the South and never wanted to be that small town girl. I wanted to take the discipline of public relations and marketing and try my hand at a larger city and an environment where it was ripe with opportunity and ripe with various industries, whether it was tech or entertainment. Transparently, my focus and interest was in entertainment, as most students are when they come out of college with a PR degree, they think it's going to be all glitz and glam and lights. And so I did work for a short time within entertainment, supporting a faint Hollywood publicist in LA for some time, around artists, as well as I would say, celebrities that were nominated for various categories within the Oscars.

Crystal Cooper: Nice.

Dwayna Haley: And so worked on Oscar campaigns or nomination campaigns for the big award show. So that's Oscars, Grammy's, Golden Globes, Daytime Emmys. And so I got a chance to try my hand in publicity itself within that model, but quickly realized that it really wasn't for me. The people are a little crazy and the industry itself is very extreme. And so, thankfully not even six months after joining with her, I got the opportunity to join with a small boutique shop in LA that focused more on cable and telecommunication. So within their company, I was able to work on network launches for different television shows and programming. I was also able to support a lot of the back end technology companies that did the infrastructure for cable. So your on demand user interface and actually did some work in building cable networks from the ground up. It was myself and my team that actually launched a channel, a little channel that could call the outdoor channel that is still out there today. And actually built full cable systems for integration into new home development.

So I got a chance to do a lot from B2C and B2B within that, and then was recruited by Ketchum here in Atlanta. And they relocated me here to join their consumer and lifestyle practice supporting at the time, Kodak and all of the digital technology innovation and product innovation that they were trying their hand at the time. So yeah, with Ketchum, I was able to do a lot of the consumer work in addition to crisis. I got my first foray into crisis with Ketchum.

Crystal Cooper: Got to love that.

Dwayna Haley: Yeah. And working with Cracker Barrel among others, but a really good, got a really chance to go from a very small boutique agency to a really large one and learn the infrastructure of that in addition to just all of the different vehicles that we use to communicate within integrated communications and marketing. From there went to the MSL. Well, went on my own for a bit, because I, like many women decided I was ready to have a family. And at that mid management level, that's when you're working 12, 16 hour days and having a family and still showing up in that way was just, it just felt impossible. So I left Ketchum, went on my own for a while, doing freelancing and consulting for some nonprofits. And from some organizations that were really looking for executive visibility and different respects and did that for a while until a former colleague at Ketchum went over to MSL and said, hey, I want to get the gang back together.

And so ended up joining MSL and supporting, again, more so of the brand and consumer lifestyle within food for McDonald's and Coca Cola, as well as food and beverage, I guess I should say, as well as CPG for the various brands within Procter & Gamble, as well as retail for Home Depot and many others. So I've gotten a chance over my career to really touch a lot of different aspects of our communications discipline. And now of course do the same for Porter, even opened up to working within agriculture and food sustainability and just really the strategic imperative around purpose and those more driving issues here in the world today.

Crystal Cooper: Now, I'm actually a former Porter Novellian myself. It's a wonderful agency. Also, I did not know you had a background in entertainment. I tried entertainment when I first left college around for the marketing. And you realize that is not the move pretty early on.

Dwayna Haley: The thing about it is that you, I think as a young person coming out of college, you have the story romanticized that all around the world, celebrities and I'm at hot parties and I'm living this really amazing life, when really that's not what, I mean, certainly there has opportunity for that, sure. I worked red carpets at all of the big war shows and I got a chance to see and be around a lot of different people. But I think what came to me and what was the biggest issue for me was in, like I said, the extreme nature of the industry. How people deal with each other, the expectations of celebrity and their management teams, and even the highly politicized nature of entertainment. It was challenging for me and not challenging in a way that, oh, I want to get in this and learn, but challenging from a soul perspective, I just didn't necessarily feel good about what I did every day. And I didn't feel good about how I was treated or expected to treat others to get things done.

I even remember my chance meeting with Harvey Weinstein and all of that. You know what I mean? Those were the days when, before the me too era was me too, those were the days all of those things happen. And so there was a lot, there was a subculture of that level of disrespect and preying upon women that certainly from a junior level perspective in the industry, you just never quite felt safe and protected. So there were a lot of variables that said, this is not the lane for me, certainly now as a senior level executive, if aligned to it again, I could go back in a whole different posture. But at that time I just didn't feel safe. And I didn't like my days and I didn't like what I was putting my hand and heart to so I was just like, yeah, this is not for me.

Crystal Cooper: I will tell you, I have got some me too stories from that era as well. It wasn't the funnest time. That's for sure.

Dwayna Haley: Not at all.

Crystal Cooper: So let's switch a little bit because I love that you have this, I'm a huge bootstraps journey type of woman. And so I love to hear this. I started from right out of college, really got into the grid and I am where I am. Can you talk a little bit about some of the packages, financial packages, benefits packages, all of that. How were you navigating those from the beginning to where you are now?

Dwayna Haley: Yeah, I would say admittedly coming from small town, fairly big university, but Black girl really entering the workforce for the first time. What I was taught to negotiate was base salary and it was my sole focus going into my career. It was all that I knew that was an option to negotiate, was try to get the most competitive base salary possible. And then everything else was just whatever they offered or whatever was standard. And in comparison to many of the junior people that I manage today, when they come in and they're negotiating, it's like, wow, I wish I had the knowledge capital and the fortitude to understand that there's so much more that you can ask for. And even just a different posture that you can take in negotiating your package. So in the beginning, it was mostly base salary, today, I understand that there are a multitude of options available to you.

Whether it is your bonus structure, be it that performance and or personal performance or job performance and or company performance, their starting bonus, there is relocation if that matters, or if that's a part of it, there is your stock options and your 401k contribution percentages and your PTO, even. One of the things that as of late has also become very important to me is in your trainings and your professional development, we bring in talent and we expect that the value of that talent to appreciate with time and tenure. But most companies don't necessarily have a formal process of professional development and training to make sure that you can bring best in class thinking and strategy, whether you're on the client side of the business or on the brand side of the business. And so for me, it has also been critical to make sure that my professional memberships and my professional development conferences and skills training are also things that are covered and negotiated as far as things that are included in the packaging.

So today it's a lot more well rounded. I will say that there are still things that I learn on the fly, that I'm like, oh, wow, I didn't even think to ask for that. But I do know that that base salary, while it needs to be strong and competitive, there are so many other things that contribute to your total compensation package that can round out your experience and make sure that you are financially positioned to win.

Crystal Cooper: Now, I will say, as I mentioned earlier, you're a dear friend and so you have been through a lot of negotiations with me. And one of the things I love about us is that we are very open about talking about our finances. Something that I don't think women, especially Black women do enough. So I know that you are sort of at the top of the grail there, which is awesome. Do you continuously negotiate even after you have the job?

Dwayna Haley: Absolutely. I mean, one of the things that I learned along the way is during merit increase moments during the year, which most companies have annually certainly around your performance reviews and that sort of thing. That's the time that I bring up, based on performance, whether it be company and, or my individual contributions, that's the time when I lean in and I ask for the things that I want, whether they are contributions that the company can make and or base salary and or bonus structure. Like when I am given like, hey, Dwayna, this is your expected bonus for the year, I don't just take that as face value. I take it in, I'm thankful for it, but I always go back and I leverage the metrics, I merchandise the metrics of my success in order to push that as far as I possibly can. If they come back with a percentage of eight to 10%, I'm like, that's fantastic.

But based on the 1036% growth that I had for this one portfolio and client last year, or for this, from a macro level portfolio, I think that that bonus should be more so in line with 15% or whatever it is. So I'm constantly pushing the envelope in that way. I don't just accept base level provisions, I certainly advocate for myself at all times, but certainly within the realm of those appropriate times to discuss. So if it's performance or merit increase time, then that's the time that I'm having the conversation.

Crystal Cooper: That's fair. You mentioned earlier, and I know you're a wife and you're a mom, and you mentioned you had to reevaluate some things when you wanted to start that family, do you feel like you lost any time or any momentum in your salary or finances because of that? And if so, how did you recoup that?

Dwayna Haley: Oh, I know I did. I mean, the journey is competitive and it is continuous. And so when you take moments to stop and focus on family, unfortunately, and it's getting better these days, but unfortunately there's not operationally within a lot of companies that support of women to make sure that they don't lose ground, just because they decided to have a family. If anything, the expectation is to do both end and sure we can, but there should be support in order to do that. There should be the expectation that companies are saying, okay, because you had a baby, you didn't lose your brain or lose your professional capability. You've just now got a bandwidth challenge that operationally we can effectively move through in order to support you. So I know that I lost ground. That mid management level of agency is where all of the groundwork and the grunt work really all starts to happen. It's where you start to see folks transition from being doers to thinkers or really taking on strategy and client service and all of those things. And that was right in the mid of when I had my first child.

So it was hard. And that's part of the reason why I decided to step away for a while, still make money and still stay active as much as I possibly could. But I wasn't finding that there was that support system to support my life comprehensively. Today, I think that I have done the work of making sure that I am highly informed around salary bands. And I will say, in all transparency, I think they are there for a company to formerly say, oh, formally say, this is what we pay within this particular position and title. But I know being a senior leader now that when we are wanting to be competitive and we are wanting to bring in top talent, we pay what's necessary to get that done. And that when you negotiate, you get what you negotiate going in. And in that, if you take the posture of expectation of a certain level of progress in your total comp, then that will be the posture that is received and unexpected along the way.

Whereas if you just accept whatever is given, then you will have a lot of times your company respond in posture of, okay, well, we're not willing to give you any more than this because they know that they don't have to. And so I've made up for it along the way. I still know that even though I've negotiated well within even my current company, there are still folks out there at level that are not Black, that are not the female, that make more than me, and don't have any additional tenure, experience or anything. And so all roles are still not created equal, but I am certainly with much more education, counsel, mentoring in this respect, even for me, my personal board of directors, if you will, I've gotten better about what to ask for, when to ask for, so that I can catch up from those years that I lost compensation based on needing to balance home and work.

Crystal Cooper: And you actually come up to a really good point because we have this community that's Signature Executive, but we also have this community that Signature Women. And I want to talk a little bit about the wage gap is persistent, right? And it's even more persistent amongst Black women. How have you mitigated that? Is it just continuing to negotiate at times that you can, or are there other ways that people can mitigate that issue?

Dwayna Haley: I think one of the things that I will say that I've been taught over the years, and I learned this actually from Carla Harris, who is a private wealth manager in Wall Street and an incredible teacher and someone that I've had the opportunity to learn from at various conferences and that sort of thing. And one thing that I learned from her is the difference between relationship capital and your performance capital, and your relationship capital is one that depreciates with value because once someone understands that your performance, excuse me, your performance capital does not appreciate with value, because one, someone understands that you will do your job. Then they write that off and just say, okay, we could expect that this person is going to do their job. That is where relationship currency and Capitol steps in. And it appreciates with value because understanding those stakeholders within your company that are able to advocate for you when you are not in certain rooms, is where you are able to see that opportunity increase.

And so in addition to making sure that excellence is a foundation for me in performance, I've also over the years learned which relationships internally are critical for me to have. What are those relationships that are going to give me transparently what the opportunity is for me and what true bands are, not the ones that I'm being given, but the true band like what everybody's making within a range of something. So that is a place where I've learned how to mitigate the face value amounts that you are given and compensations that you are given, because then with that knowledge capital, I'm able to better negotiate for myself. So it really has been about leaning into that relationship, currency and capital and making sure that I have folks that I can trust that will give me the intel necessary to best position myself.

Crystal Cooper: I love that. If you had to give, so let's end with this because I like this. If you had to give one piece of advice to your daughter as she entered the workforce, what would it be?

Dwayna Haley: I think that my primary counsel to my daughter would be around posture. I think a lot of times as women and certainly as Black women, we take the posture of asking, hoping, praying, wishing, and also hoping that our performance currency and capital will be enough to earn our way into the value and compensation that we should have. What I know now is that when you take a posture of command and expectation, that you just have a totally different conversation with people, it's not one of, because women are often seen as bratty or all of these different titles and attributes that you are looking to avoid. And so you take one of being complacent and being pleasing, and that's just not going to work. If you want to get the compensation and total structure, and also the autonomy and respect that you are looking for within your organization, then you first have to take that posture. You are your own best advocate.

And so my advice to my daughter would be not to go in asking for something and not necessarily to go in demanding it, but it is a presence to command it with the manner and posture that you take an expectation. This is what I expect based on my research, based on my knowledge of expectation of performance, based on company performance. This is my expectation and it just sort of best slight shift, just completely changes the dynamic of the conversation that you're able to have and the compensation that you're able to receive.

Crystal Cooper: I love that. Don't ask, don't demand, but command.

Dwayna Haley: Command, it really is a posture thing. And still in partnership, I would also say that depending upon the level of the role, junior wise, that's certainly is a good thing, but senior wise, there are folks out there that can help negotiate these things for you that put a buffer in between you and company. If you are looking for a net new role or negotiating a net new role, that takes the emotion out of it so that you yourself are not fighting with the company or negotiating with the company, but you have that conduit in order to negotiate those things for you, whether it be an attorney or otherwise. And so there are mechanisms in place such that when you come in the door day one, you're not the person that just beat them up over the numbers, instead, you're the person that they negotiated hard to have. So yeah, that posture definitely makes a difference.

Crystal Cooper: This has been an excellent conversation, Dwayna, as it always is every time we speak. So I appreciate your time today.

Dwayna Haley: Thank you.

Crystal Cooper: And if you ever want to follow Dwayna's journey or hear any more tidbits of advice about her journey, you can follow her at, it's @theprgirl?

Dwayna Haley: It's AskThePRGirl.

Crystal Cooper: AskThePRGirl. Thank you.

Dwayna Haley: A-S-K ThePRGirl, AskThePRGirl across all social and certainly happy with all connects on LinkedIn, love to build my professional network.

Crystal Cooper: Awesome. Thank you so much for joining us today, Dwayna, and thank you guys for listening.

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