

Welcome to this episode of timely topics. an educational program of Lotus network. Lotus network believes it's never too late to rediscover your potential and make the next chapter of your life the very best.

## **Leslie Heins**

Good morning. Good morning, everybody. My name is Leslie Heins, and I want to welcome you today to our timely topic featuring Alex Lewis from Channel Nine. Today's timely topic it's never too late to be your own advocate will be brought to life by Alex Lewis Tv anchor for Channel Nine before we begin her presentation.

I want to tell you about our amazing fall schedule.

Mark your calendars for September thirteenth for our next timely topic featuring Regina Jackson and Saira Rao. They have developed a program called Race to dinner. This is an energizing, informational program. diving into racial equality, they feel Saira and Regina feel there is no better place for really honest conversation than at the dinner table. Breaking bread together will help facilitate conversations around white supremacy, racism, and xenophobia.

Next we're so excited to tell you we have teamed up with Rose Women's Hospital, to produce a series of events all centered on Women's healthcare for all stages of life the first event is September 29th in person at Rose women's hospital at noon Our focus, this for this series is on breast cancer. Our goals would be to increase breast cancer. awareness. Educated attendees on breast cancer, health, increase, screening and breast health interventions, and provide all kinds of resources for our network.

So be on the lookout for that invitation it's just coming soon, and then in November we are so excited to welcome back Steph Wagner. you might remember her. She was the moderator with Maria Shriver last august. Steph's Expertise is to empower women to become effective stewards of our own finances. So she's going to address the financial impact of widowhood, share suggestions to help secure equitable settlements in marriage dissolutions and establish a solid foundation for women in our next chapter.

So mark your calendars for her too, and so now on to Alex Lewis.

## **Terry Rubin**

Alex is an Emmy Award-winning, broadcast journalist, whose career has taken her to newsrooms across the country from covering hurricanes in Louisiana and Texas to historic elections in Washington and investigating law enforcement in Ohio Alex's career has challenged her at every turn. Adds outside of the news. Alex has used her skill sets in unique ways, creating educational programming use at Nasa's Johnson Space Center, and producing and hosting an award-winning national documentary with pbs on domestic violence among the many hats. she's worn throughout her eclectic career. Alex's favorite role is Mom to her two-year-old daughter. Ava.

So let's sit back and listen to her wise insight on the theme of today's timely topic. It's never too late to be your own advocate.

## **Alex Lewis**

Hello! good afternoon. Oh, my goodness, thank you for having me. I feel so honored to just be in this position, to be talking to you all today. When Leslie reached out I initially was a little taken by surprise. but I'm so excited to be here, and a little nervous right, because I'm usually on the other side of the equation here, like the one having to pull out the authentic at the authenticity right and the quotes, and the in-spot inspiration, and so I hope I'm able to do that with you today.

I, as Leslie said I'm an anchor at 9News. If you watch it you have seen me but there's so much to the story of how I got here today, and I feel like being my own advocate. Is not something I ever thought I would have to do or become a pro at.

I literally was forced to in this line of work that I do with Being a broadcast journalist, and in the route that I

have taken, I think when you look at a journalist bio, you can look at my 9News bio. You can look at my LinkedIn and you see like all of these different places that I've worked in working your way up the trajectory and paying your dues. It's like Wow, you've been so many places but sometimes those it's not necessarily by choice, you feel forced to make decisions to go to places where you want those certain opportunities.

And so I think the best way to kind of tell you how I got to this place in my life is to take you to the very beginning. So bear with me before we get into the Q and A portion. And I hope you have some things that you'd like to ask in some white that I can shed.

But I just want to start with. I always knew I wanted to be a news anchor, and I think that's really fortunate in life when you kind of have being able to be bold and your purpose from the beginning knowing that this is what I want. At a very early age I started to act in model professionally as professional as you can in Houston, Texas.

But I did. commercials at Tv shows. My claim to fame was. I was on Walker, Texas Ranger as a guest star. One episode, and I also did a kids talk show for upn and that's kind of when the bug hit I'm like I love being in front of the camera. I love being able to connect to people in an authentic way but also covering current events and muse like that. Was it that was marrying these two things that I loved, which is writing number one and two being on camera.

So I went to the University of Miami which at the time Was the one of top five journals and programs in the country, double majored, broadcast journalism and political science, and I graduated. A few days later I started my first job in news in Lafayette, Louisiana.

if you kind of know how news works. The entire country is divided into two-hundred and ten DMAs, with the last being It's like Glenn Montana. You know population twenty thousand, to Number one being New York City, and all of the other cities in between, based on size and Denver is number sixteen. If you're curious.

So I started last year at Louisiana market, one hundred sixty-seven, I started in a hybrid position, in which I produced the news four days a week, and I reported two days. A week I was making twenty-seven thousand dollars, and I thought it was awesome, right. It was my first job in use, and for an entry level position. not bad, because I wasn't front of the camera and a lot of people work years behind the scenes before ever you know, being in front of the camera, and I think I also had a leg up because I spent most of my life being in on camera in that regard, even though it was commercials and little talk shows.

But I was comfortable when that red light went on, and so I really thought that I was just going to be discovered and left yet, like good morning, America was going to come call calling me the network. Somebody was going to find me somehow in Latvia Louisiana and I wasn't going to have to you know make that long, painful trajectory to the top.

Well, needless to say that Didn't quite happen and it was such a shock to the system, because if you know anything about Louisiana, you know hurricanes are a real force there, and this was two years after Katrina and Hurricanes Icon Gustav came, and one of the first reports that I found myself doing was covering hurricane Ike and I spent seven days on A Cot in the Iberia Paris sheriff's office, and i'll never forget that, because when you hear Katrina I think most people think of New Orleans. rightfully so, but it also hit Akina all of the parishes inside of there. Which was our county.

Yeah, daunting task. when you think people had nothing. They were living in FEMA trailers with blue tarps from Katrina. Then those are wiped away by another hurricane. When you talk about people having nothing and having to be that person with the microphone in their face. And it was too much. two years in. I walked away.

I also remember thinking Wait a minute I'm supposed to be on the news desk by now. Where's the makeup crew where where's my time on the new, on the anchor desk like this? Is not going according to plan. I'm in the trenches working my app off, and I just thought it was going to be a little smoother than that, and so I just felt like it was too much. It wasn't what I bargained for.

so I of all things moved to New York, thinking that's how i'll be discovered. And I was a receptionist by day, server, host at a fancy restaurant. By night waiting to be discovered needless to say that didn't happen, and you know I moved home to Houston to my parents' house, my tail between my legs and my parents, saying, I told you so. But I still wasn't ready to go back to news and I'm like there's got to be something out there that's going to be as fulfilling for me right so oh, my I tried my hand at pr I taught acting and modeling classes. I did some administrative work. I did a lot for a year, and was miserable, was a miserable human being, and decided my calling is still the same.

I do have what it takes to do this I'm going to make it to that anchor desk. No matter how many hurricanes blizzards how many tough stories I have to do, I'm going to be that I'm going to do it.

So I remember putting together a reel of a two-year-old tape from Lafayette Louisiana, which keep in mind, is a teeny, tiny market, and sending it to Houston stations and one of them bit, and brought me on as a freelance reporter, and I was determined to get a job at that station.

I worked as a freelance reporter There's not a lot of longevity to it, because you're basically on call. I would work the morning show. I would work that come back it that night into the night show the month of March. That year I worked twenty-nine days. I was working ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fifteen days in a row, doing whatever they asked. I filled in doing traffic. I mean anything this station asked me.

I wanted to prove that I could do it, and that and I think I was proving it to myself as well. after walking away after two years in Louisiana. But I had to prove that I could do this and so a year and some change in the news director came to me and said, hey, we see how hard you've been working. want to offer you a job. And I'm like, yeah this. this is it and they offered me a producing position, a position to produce traffic.

And I it was surprising to me because at that point I'd covered everything. I'd cover huge court cases also hurricanes in Texas. But policing I mean I was in the trenches every day, sometimes doing two or three stories a day. so it's confusing to me how it went from me showing my chops as a reporter and a storyteller for you, whittling me down to producing traffic.

And the response by that particular news director was Well, you know we think you'd be a great traffic girl. We'd love to train you, up get you from the system, and maybe one day, maybe one day, you could be our traffic girl, and I thought about it right.

This is Houston, Texas. This is Market eight, one of the top ten markets of the country. This is my home. The idea of having my family and my friends, and my second-grade teacher watching me on the news every night and being at home in the comfort of Houston, I really thought about the job.

So I went back and I said, well, what are you going to pay? And they said forty thousand dollars which in the span of muse and working in the market eight, that is a fraction of what my colleagues were making.

I didn't know at that time how to advocate for myself. I didn't know how to push how to say "well I don't want to do traffic. I want to be a reporter. I think I deserve more money than a fraction of what other people are making. Despite the experience I've shown you what I can do."

Long story short. There I walked away. I ended up putting another reel together, shopping it out on my own and I landed a job in Dayton, Ohio Market sixty-five and I was determined going to Dayton. Being. I feel like kind of categorized in a certain way. I remember talking all my hair off I don't know I thought that was going to prove that I was a real journalist.

But I did, and I moved to date in Ohio, going backwards. What fifty plus markets, and just grinding. To this day I'm not sure. I've ever worked as hard I mean I got into some investigative work. I found loopholes in policing and Colorado State law covered the bomb cyclone of twenty fifteen. If you're familiar with the John Crawford case which is right after Tamir Rice but was another unarmed Black man who was shot and killed by police, and a Walmart covered that story religiously day in and out for almost a year, I mean really cut my teeth, and really became the reporter that I wanted to be.

And so then I felt the dream is to be an anchor. to be on the news dust to be that trusted voice to be the Kim

Christiansen, if you will, of whatever market that is. And so I remember going to the news director about two years in, and saying, hey, I see that so, and so is off on the weekend I'll come in. I'll work a six-day week. can I fill in on the weekend news.

“ No, that's okay, you know, we have somebody to do that.” and I'd ask again, and I'd ask again, and I need to ask you about thirty or forty times, and I was told yes, twice, once, on Christmas and once on Thanksgiving.

I anchor twice and I realized that it wasn't going to get the opportunities I wanted at that station. It just wasn't happening for me and I also realized that it was time to start making money Number one, and I wanted to be an anchor, and I had dealt like I paid my do seven years' experience at this point I covered Every story There is to cover I was the best spot news reporter at that station you couldn't tell me otherwise, and I wasn't getting you know, the respect and opportunities.

So I did the first thing. I felt like I needed to write. Realizing that I couldn't be my own advocate in that I wanted a job where I felt like I needed an agent, so I went out and sought someone to be my advocate when it came to contracts and the negotiation, which we'll talk a little more about.

But it is such an intense part, being a broadcast journalist. So I found this great agent, and I said I want to be an anchor. but I've only anchored two days in my life. he said, “Okay, let's put it on real and let's shop it and oh, let's try a long story short.” We did put those two days those min shows on a real and landed a job in Seattle. Washington market twelve doubling my salary as a weekend anchor.

Oh, man, I get emotional. Just thinking about that Because that was such a real, validating moment for me, being told No, right over and over and over, but still going back and still saying, I know this is all I need. All I need is one opportunity to show you what I can do and I want to show this station so that I could potentially have an opportunity to be an anchor at that station.

And it didn't happen but man was something greater on the other end of those two little opportunities that they threw my way, and I went to Seattle, and I felt like I had arrived. I was the weekend anchor, which was just one day, Saturday night anchor, but it was such a huge opportunity. Seattle was the first really cool city that I lived in. It was a big market, my management there was the first place. I felt kind of nurtured, and that management loved me.

I was promoted twice in one year, which had not happened in my career. I never been promoted in my career. and I went from anchoring Saturday nights to early morning anchor, four thirty to five AM, and also being the breaking news anchor for the rest of that show you know Fox shows long from four thirty AM to ten AM and it was also the first time that it wasn't a general assignment reporter being thrown out into the field every day, and you know covering those in endless cycle of news stories I see to cover some more long-form things, and being able to choose the stories I wanted to.

And it was incredible. Then we launched a weekend morning show, and they gave me that show and that's such a unique opportunity in news, because very rarely our new shows launched, and I had a hand in picking my co- anchor I was anchoring for hours a day at four hours, Saturday and Sunday, and it was such an incredible experience.

And it felt like a dream job. For the first time in my career I was living a dream job in an awesome city. This might sound sad for the first time in my adult life I had made friends. It's hard to make friends as an adult which I think a lot of I'm. sure everyone can attest to. But certainly when you live in a different city every two or three years, and I have this great, a whole like friend group.

I became that killer in the community that I wanted. I was on boards of foundations, and If I had the opportunity to start in seeing events and moderating panels, and just doing all the things that the honors really right, that that come with being a trust voice in the community.

And I did that for four years, and it was so exciting. And finally my contract came up, and it came time to say, “okay what's next? Do I stay here?” I love the station. I was in heaven. I wanted to. But one thing was missing for me I was getting into my thirties at that point, and Well, well into my thirties, and I this time was

tired of working weekends It had been over a decade and I've been working weekends and perpetually single perpetually, saying No right to vacation, saying no to this opportunity, because always wanting to be there, always wanting to be able to say Yes, you can count on me you need somebody to go cover that wildfire in Chilean I'm that person you need someone to anchor on Christmas Day.

but it came time that I've done all of this right. ten years I've been sacrificing so much my job with my life, and never been on a girl's trip. Thirty-four years and I've never been on a girl's trip at that point. So I said. I need my weekends and it so happened that there were two weekday anchor jobs that came available at the time. that my contract is coming up, and i'll make a little amazing and I went to my news director I said you know you love me. I love it here. let I want to stay, let's make this happen.

But I want to go Monday through Friday, and my news director ultimately said, "No, we love you to death. We love you where you are, and we want you to stay we're not going to promote you. But please stay."

and here comes another hard decision. in that I did not want to leave. It's my dream job right in an incredible city first time in my life, having an actual support system in a friend group that felt like family having a key to the city. I did not want to leave, but I knew that I wanted to be a full time. Anchor working Monday through Friday, and to have some balance in my life which I never had before.

And so I started, called up the agent and we started looking for opportunities, and that's when years came a call in. And you were ever curious about what it's like to get a job in time. Use. let's talk for itself, because when I tell you it is the most rigorous process I've ever been through.

But after that process I actually came to. I applied, or was interviewing, auditioning for the morning anchor job, which I did not get. But months later, and I thought it was over they never contacted me. I'm like Oh, I you know that that didn't work out, and I had no other jobs on the table at the time, and was in a position where I don't think I want to stay right in Seattle because they're not giving me an opportunity to progress and move into a weekday composition, and months later came back and said, "Well, we don't want you to be our morning anchor, But we see you having value in evening and we want you to anchor nine o'clock." and I'm like, "nine o'clock? I didn't know you had a nine." "Well it's on our sister station." And essentially it was anchoring thirty min on KTVD with V. One and only Kyle Clark and I said "okay that's a cool opportunity. But increase thirty min a day on a secondary network I'm currently anchoring fifteen hours of news collectively. in a bigger market."

And the answer was no. he came back couple of weeks later. "We're going to give you the four two. How do you think about that we're going to put you on the four o'clock show. the number one show it for with queue. Huge personalities, Tom Green and Kim Christiansen and we're going to put you on the night."

So good that sounds more like it, and I'm so excited for this opportunity. I turned down the opportunity to stay in Seattle. and move to Denver, and months into doing this o'clock shell with Tim with Tom and Kim. I see Tim, who are just incredible human beings I it's a little different of a dynamic to join a show with people who have known each other for three years and have been working together for twenty to be a completely different demographic in them, and your task to shine, and to have chemistry, and to make it work.

They gave me three months, and my news director called me and said, hey, it's not working, and we're taking you off the show, and I was devastated. I came here to anchor and to be demoted for the first time in my life, but also had rate, having that anchoring being reduced by seventy-five percent. What am I doing here like? Should I have stayed in Seattle? I just. I was reeling at that point, and I spent a couple of months pouting. I went to work and did a lot of nothing because I knew I was under contract.

I couldn't go I had three years. I was four months into a three-year contract, and I was anchoring thirty min a day on a secondary station that nobody watched. And what how? What am I supposed to do?

I remember after Christmas coming back and just saying I've got to figure this out, and you know what I'm going to do. I'm going to go back to basics I'm going back to storytelling. I'm going to go back to what is meaningful to me and that's telling stories of communities that if I'm not there, right? If I'm not that person telling the stories.

I'm a very emotional person if you watch me on the news. you know there's tears often. But I felt like that's Why, I was here that's what I was task to do. I'm the only black anchor. at news one of the only Black women anchors one of in the city which is absurd and a talk for another day.

Okay. but I felt like I had an opportunity and if it wasn't going to be on the anchor desk. It was going to be to tell stories, and I want to end before we start. Q. A. with a story. that I haven't said aloud, so really forgive me if I can be emotional on this one.

But I want to go back to date in Ohio I was doing some really like cool work there. Things that I'd never done investigative work. I found a loophole in a law about a drunk to, and literally change the law in Ohio, and I'm so proud of the story, and I went to my news director I said, "Hey, I you know I didn't get into this for accolades, or you know, for awards or anything like that. But this is pretty cool like. How about we submit this for an Emmy?"

And my news director never forget This looked at me and said, "I don't really think it's up to par, you know you wouldn't want to embarrass yourself by submitting a story, and it not being nominated like it's not a good look."

I was dumbfounded. This is my news director, right? The boss of my station basically telling me my work wasn't good enough, and he wasn't going to submit it for an Emmy, and at the time. And this is my ignorance I didn't know that as an individual. I could submit it myself. I thought your station, had to do it for you and that's generally it's very expensive, and that's kind of you know how it goes. but I could have done it on my own I wasn't knowledgeable enough to do that, so I didn't.

but I took that with me, and I didn't believe him right. I knew that I was talented. I knew that the story was great. I knew that I had cut my teeth and done some incredible work throughout my career. At that time. but those words still sat with you.

It's amazing isn't it? You can know your worth, know how talented you are, and have some superior. Someone at the top who may not like you, for whatever reason may not believe in you. For whatever reason, those words still penetrate, and they did so for years. I was totally against submitting work for any so I just wasn't going to do it.

And hold that little nugget and let's fast forward to 9News, and I'm sure you were all familiar with the one Elijah McClain, who, it's hands of war police and Paramedics He was walking home from the grocery store with brisk iced tea. Someone deemed him an unsavory, threatening character Aurora police put him in a show, called, injected him with enough ketamine to kill a five-hundred-pound horse and he died at the hospital days later. Janine had never talked to Media. At length she understand understandably right, as you can imagine. Never wanted to talk to anyone

that's where two years later on the second annual anniversary of his death, she decided to share to someone that she was ready to bare her soul and share her story like you only want to talk to the right person. So she went to 9News or more accurately her lawyer went to 9News and went to her news director and said "she'll tell her story to you. It'll be an exclusive interview if you can present the right journalists that she's comfortable talking to."

So mine used. Director presented a journalist, and the lawyer said, no, you presented another journalist and lawyer said No. Wrong. He goes back and he presents two journalists to the lawyer, and at that point Janine gets involved and says, "Hey, this is about me feeling comfortable bearing my soul here's an idea do you have any Black women shared. Experience would go a long way here, right just in the most minute way."

And lo and behold, they did. They did have a Black woman on the staff, which was me, and I sat down with Janine, and she agreed to meet with me right not to give him the interview, but to me. with me.

So I sat down. I was shooting in her lawyer for a few hours, and we just talked. I mean there were tears there's not running it was the really emotional meeting. We met next week. For a couple of hours we exchanged numbers, and there was text conversations and about. two weeks later she said, Okay, i'll do the in interview with Alexandra. and what day that was? We interviewed her for four hours, and then took the

incredibly painstaking task of putting this immensely emotional four hour interview into the story of six minutes and forty-seven seconds, and when I tell you I was writing that story and yes, I was doing it for Shannon, and I want to show her passion this incredible advocacy for police reform, and some of the changes she has made in this State that has trickled into some Federal changes as well.

I mean just this incredible woman to share this mother's story. I wanted to do her and her son justice.

But if I tell you, I didn't have a chip on my shoulder for being the fifth choice to be the woman to be the journalist to do this interview man, I put my heart in soul into this thing Okay, and after it aired Janine called me and we cried on the phone, and she was so proud and honored, and she knew she made the right decision in allowing me to do the story.

And to this day it's the greatest piece of work Oh, God, it just thinking about it! I hope you all are able to watch it. If you Haven't seen it because it really is just the story of Mother's soul and going through something the unimaginable.

But I'm telling the story because as weeks ago. I submitted it as a compilation of work for an Emmy for the best specialty assignment reporter. In our region, and these are done news, and these are done by region. So this is Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming. And Oklahoma and I want I won the any or best specialty assigned reporter in our region, and the first thing I thought about was years ago with somebody who told me. I shouldn't even submit a story let alone when an overall excellence award.

And I also remember being a fifth choice to tell a story that changed the way I view my voice and the value that I put into my voice in my work, and I am now saying that to you, as an Emmy Winner.

Okay, can we, before I get even more emotional? Can we open it up?

### **Leslie Heins**

You are like I have like goose pimples I'm not kidding, you know your emotion and your raw ability to share with us, and I know Terry's going to take this over but I just I just have to ask you one question. So

So you got I mean like you've left me like, Okay, so you did you were on the substation, or whatever it was, Channel nine, and then you got moved. How did you make it? to I mean I see you every night you know when we're on?

### **Alex Lewis**

Well, that's a great question because people ask that as Well, to this day my official role is still the only show that I officially anchor is the nine o'clock, with Kyle. But in addition to that show, after kind of showing what I can do on that station, and that chemistry that Kyle and I have kind of formed over three years working together.

Now. they saw that, hey? I kind of knew what I was doing, and so now I am the primary. Fill in for not just Kim, but Tom and Kyle. And when you have three people with the seniority that they do, they have a ton of I mean combined. the amount of vacation time that they have is incredible.

So you always see me in a fill-in capacity. I fill in for our three prime time anchors so that's on full five and your average week, you know. I'm anchoring four or five different shows, because of that.

### **Terry Rubin**

Amazing really amazing Yeah, thank you I your just your raw openness is amazing. Thank you. Oh, my gosh Alex I like we're all giving you a standing ovation right now. Thank you. Congratulations on this Emmy, and your story, I mean.

I think I can speak for everybody when I tell you that we're sitting here listening like rooting you on going come on this weren't so engaged and wanting to read you on I want to just can I read a couple things that

people have said that your emotion and authenticity is awesome.

Thank you so much for sharing your story. Your persistence is amazing. This is an incredible story. They thank you for sharing your journey. It is inspirational and affirming awesome you know we will we'll get everything into the chat and send links, and we are just so proud of you we are you're wonderful thank you for sharing and you're a fabulous storyteller please keep being brave. Our community and country is better because you have been bold.

This question comes from Cathy Fleischmann. What can be done to help support women of color reach their goals? Maybe we can start with that as our first question. Oh, my goodness, that is such an incredible question. Thank you for all of those comments. Thank you.

### **Alex Lewis**

Yeah, Cathy, that is an incredible question.

And I will tell you. from my experience I spend, I think, my career right. I spend my professional life in rooms where I'm the only person who looks like me. So the idea of work, place ally, ally in life is absolutely integral.

I cannot tell you. Let me tell you a little bit of the story with this, you know, coming into 9News and realizing that you know I was going to have to do more reporting than expected, I started pitching stories, and I was being met with a lot of nose right? because the stories I like to do aren't your average typical stories.

I remember pitching a story true story about slippers and sliders. This incredible organization that takes Black and brown youth and teaches them to ski and takes them to one or park and Copper Mountain in all these places on the weekends and teaches them how to ski. I'm from Houston Texas, and you know, little Black girl, I have no idea what I'm doing on skis.

I'm trying to learn though. and so like what an incredible image that would be to put on the news beautiful Black and brown faces sliding down a pristine mountain I mean just showing this imagery that you don't often see, and I was so excited about the story I found out about this organization, and I pitched it, and I was told by someone who will remain nameless.

But I was told by a manager well that's not really the type of story we would lend our resources for, cause I was going to have to come in on the weekend. And they were going to have to provide a photographer for me on a weekend. Pay them over time. They're like "No, it's not really our type of story."

It's heartbreaking, not taking no for an answer. I think one thing about advocacy and getting the yes when You're told. No is knowing your audience and knowing who is going to help you right.

And so the manager said, "No, you're not going to tell the story."

But I knew, knowing my colleagues and kind of what's going on in their lives, that you the Pm.

Producer was kind of struggling to get some this was for Black history month to get some content in February, and I said, "Hey, I pitched a few stories that you know I'm being told No, for but how about we bring them on and do live interviews" and she's like "that's an amazing idea."

And so the answer was, you know no wasn't the beautiful you know beautifully told story that I felt like these organizations deserves. I still got that coverage right. I still got these faces, these organizations, that limelight that I felt like they deserved. And we did live interviews on the four o'clock show

going back to allyship. It really was finding that people in my building are nights. who just left us last week when very sad about, but she was someone I was told. No, with a lot of stories I wanted to do. I remember when she came into the building I sat down with her. I said, "Hey, girl, like I know nobody in the building is doing stories quite like this, but just give me an opportunity." And she said, "Whatever you want to do let's

do it.” She greenlit a lot of projects that I’ve done some that haven’t been that well received by the community. Some that have received rave reviews

but at the end of the day, I think half to be bold in telling stories and doing things that other journalists Aren't doing. Have someone just said yes, to have someone be an appointment believing in you? It Was it to be told “No” to be demoted you know that's demoralizing in a lot of way in a lot of ways. But have someone in the building who doesn't look like me who can say things that I can't necessarily get away with, who can pitch the exact same story, but because it's coming from a different vessel the answer is Yes.

So whenever you see I feel like a Black woman, whether struggling or being told no. How can I help? It might not be your project. it might not be your idea. But how can you help push this forward, I think, is such an immense opportunity.

And I have been very fortunate to seek out those so happens to be women, as it generally is. Am I right? but I’ve been so fortunate to seek out those women in my newsroom who have been my allies in saying “Yes, let's do this. Let's give her the opportunity” and it has made all of the difference in the stories that I've been able to tell.

### **Terry Rubin**

Oh, that yes, it's I can understand that and what of the things Lotus network really believes in our group of women and a few good men. Is a lot of personal growth in development and you've had a lot in the course of your career.

One of the things that I feel like was in your takeaways in our invitation, and it's on the website that people will be able to access. And see you're the recording of this talk. But one of the things that you said is that the idea of that? Everything is happening for you and not to you and explain how maybe you can use this mantra for your how we can use it for our benefit, because I think that we're a group of women that really trust that everything is unfolding and There's a lot of personal growth and development in this a hundred percent.

I mean there's so many I hope you took some of those takeaways from the stories that I told from literally the Janine McClain interview being the first voice of that story, and feeling like “Wait a minute I’m not chop liver over here”, but taking that chip right that need to prove myself and pour myself into the story that had maybe one of the other choices before me done the story wouldn't have been it wouldn't have resonated, just landed the way that it did.

I love this idea of things are happening for you and not to you.

### **Alex Lewis**

When I got to 9News. Certainly, it took talent. It was challenged to view this as something that was going to help my personal growth. But it absolutely did. And for Me I feel like it that's what's on the other side of self-doubt and fear for me when Leslie reached out sent me an email and said “Hey, do you want to speak? We do these timely topics kind of like Ted Talks styles that need a link.”

And I started Googling and I’m like did I hear the right person. How I saw this incredible dynamic group of women and I’m like I don't measure up like this is insane. How my first inclination was to politely decline, to say no. And then their little light Bulb went off, and I realized Well, that's just that self-doubt and we all have it. And I found in my life a hundred percent of the time, literally a hundred percent of the time on the other side of that self-doubt.

In that fear is something awesome, and it may not be a win. It may not be that I hit that out of the ballpark the first time. It may not be. That was my best effort. but it is always I’m so glad I did that.

And so you know. There, I feel like there's this big push right now with saying no knowing then to say no is powerful. But there is so much excitement and opportunity and growth on the other side of saying, yes.

### **Terry Rubin**

You just got another remark in the chat about. did your message of positivity, you know, and just that. You can see that just the that you're spitting you're putting a positive spin on everything. And we just really love that.

So there's been a lot of things in the chat, and I hope everybody can take time to read them. If you have a second. But I have another question for you.

So you have an unorthodox lifestyle, you know when the news happens, and if you happen to be on, and it's a big breaking news story, I mean, or even if you're not on you may be called upon. How do you advocate for balance in your life? How do you like? What do you do and you're a single mom? And so come on share with us. How are we going to do all these things I love?

### **Alex Lewis**

thank you for that question and it's something I'm speaking from experience in that I lived a little of life without any balance story, right like I was afraid to take a day off because that was that could be a missed opportunity that I could be called to be on the news desk that I could be called to show my anchoring chops, and so I spent so much of my life.

Never, never take time for myself, and it really took having a daughter like having a child to realize that me as a mom, but as an individual. My happiness is my daughter's happiness.

I would work I mean like a dog, and still do sometimes we have what we call sweeps months which are basically our ratings. Periods May, November, June, and February, in which, or tasks to do a special stories and series. And so those are the days that we're you know we're working twenty-hour days, trying to get our projects done in time, because that's when Nielsen checks our ratings.

And so it those days those weeks where I'm working constantly I come home. I'm tired I'm exhausted I don't want to be bothered to is a very fun. but rambunctious age. And so I just find in those moments that I'm not my best self. So I'm not going to be best, mommy for Ava right.

And so learning to advocate for myself, and in asking for that time off first of all, I mean, I would never fathom in a million years that I would ever ask with time off in sweeps that's supposed to be a no zone. They literally block it off with red x's you're not allowed to take off during these months. My birthday is in November, which is a sweeps months. My Daughter's birthday is in May which is also a sweeps month. So yeah, never being able to celebrate my birthday or my daughter's birthday. Yeah, right, I'm not doing that.

and so after she was born. I remember going to my news. director which again, people don't do this and I say, hey, I need off in May, and I was Yeah, I was met with what it's for my daughter. She's one, and I'm taking off for two days so that I can celebrate her, and the answer was, yes.

there's so much fear put in us. That we can right the answer was, yes, of course you can have the day off right. Something I've. had to advocate for myself just in having this unorthodox schedule I work from two P.M. to eleven P. M. and being, you know, a single mom, and doing it all on my own. Essentially I had babysitters that were coming in and working at night, and it was really difficult, because here a weekend would come.

I moved to Denver with no family whatsoever. I came for the opportunity, like we do in our industry. You move where the job is. No friends, no family, no support system here. You know my parents are in Houston and I found that with the babysitter coming in and out during the week that that was great, I was able to go to work but I couldn't get a glass wine on the weekends I couldn't see a movie I had no personal time, and how integral that is.

I had advocate for myself within my family. I went to my parents. I went to my daughter's. father and asked and advocated and asked for those resources. "I can't do this on my own I need live-in help. We make okay money. We don't do that great in. the news industry I need support and help financially, that I can bring someone into my home and have full time help."

And that was a hard ask, because, you know, I felt like This is a situation that I was a part of being in, and now everything is on my shoulders. But I went and asked for help, and on the other side of that ask. The answer was, yes.

### **Terry Rubin**

Oh, I just I'm loving, hearing, this because it speaks to really living our truth, living our authenticity not being fear-based going forward and finding that maybe there's more support and love for you out there than for any of us than we ever imagined, and I think, unbelievable of us.

You have a family here in Lotus Network, and a support system in a community, and we are here for you. We have truly I loved this story and you sharing it because You've been so very real, and you've told us I mean I loved it. You knew at a young age that you wanted to do this and you were already finding destiny. You already like, you know, modeling, and on a show. You had gotten it like a little, you know, cameo appearance that made you kind of get the bug.

But then you know, that kept going for you, and your destiny has kept unfolding for you in the most positive ways that have brought you to where we are today with getting to meet you and mingle with your story in this moment so that we can all grow and learn from it I can't thank you enough, Alex, for taking the time in your off period for sharing this story, and being a part of lotus network with us.

We are so very, very appreciative, and we are your true leaders in our rooting you on for all that the future holds for you in every way. You are beautiful from the inside out, truly beautiful from the inside out.

Thank you all I want to just we're running out of time for questions and answers, but I just want to thank everybody for being here. What a special day we have all just shared together. Leslie is going to put in the chat that are.

You can connect with this on Instagram and on Facebook. We have next Tuesday our Let's Talk About It session. Alex you don't have to be there but it is about your conversation today with us, and it's at noon. A zoom invite will be sent out and it's to further this conversation about being our own advocate, for that which we want, and it and I think it doesn't matter what it is that we're wanting. We know we have to be our own advocate I would imagine and

You've given us such important food for thought today, and there's a lot to unpack here, and I think that's an opportunity for us lotus network community to unpack this a little bit more. So thank you very, very much. Thank you very much for being here.

I think that together we can create change, and we are doing that together here at Lotus Network. So please stay connected. Please stay safe and blessings on all of you and everyone.

Alex, Congratulations on this Emmy. You rock you totally rock. Thank you so much.