

The Weekly Take

New Rules: Earning Respect, Sustaining Engagement and Improving Presence

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Spencer Levy

Happy 2026, folks. The new year is a useful milestone – a time to reset, reimagine, and revitalize. That's why we make resolutions and why things like performance reviews typically happen around the turn of a calendar year. And that's why on this episode, we bring you a perspective that might change the way you navigate your career: catchy ideas about status and power, about leadership and negotiating, about building networks and personal brands, and, to use our guests to turn of phrase, about being a “Likeable Badass.”

Alison Fragale

When we go across jobs, contexts, the definition of what is useful will change, and therefore the definition of badass will change. But badass to me always means you have something of value to bring into this context.

Spencer Levy

That's Alison Fragale, author, professor, and former McKinsey management consultant. A PhD in organizational behavior, Alison has taught at the University of North Carolina Business School since 2004, and is the author of a career-oriented book called *Likeable Badass, How Women Get the Success They Deserve*. Coming up, we open up a book written with women in mind, but we find wisdom for anyone interested in a new way of thinking about career progression. I'm Spencer Levy and that's right now on The Weekly Take.

Spencer Levy

Welcome to The Weekly take and I am delighted to be with Alison Fragale, UNC professor at the business school and author of a fantastic book called *Likeable Badass*. Alison, welcome to the show.

Alison Fragale

Thanks for having me.

Spencer Levy

So Alison, thanks for coming out. And if you don't mind telling our listeners, who are you and what do you do?

Alison Fragale

I am an organizational psychologist and I do a lot of work also specifically for women using that same behavioral science to help women think about how to navigate their careers, which is the context in which I wrote that book you talked about, *Likeable Badass*, which we can unpack a bit about status and power and influence and how we do all those things.

And when I'm not doing any of that, I am chasing around after three teenagers who are all named after professional athletes.

Spencer Levy

I can't go much further, but do you mind if you're able to say their names?

Alison Fragale

I can. So my husband is from Chicago, born and raised, and I am from Pittsburgh. So they all have Chicago athlete first names and Pittsburgh, specifically Pittsburgh Steelers middle names, all of the era when we, my husband and I grew up. So we'll date ourselves a bit.

Spencer Levy

So I already know that you've got Franco and you've got yourself a Michael and you've got yourself a Chris, you know, I could go right through the list, but I'm not going to mention anybody else because Ditka didn't make the list. He was a couple years before.

Alison Fragale

That's right. So we, you are correct, except they are all last names. So we have a Jordan and we have a Harris and things like that. Yes, we do.

Spencer Levy

That's super cool. That's badass, if I don't mind saying, since your book is *Likeable Badass*. I love that. I remember one of my cousins is named after Joe Willie Namath. And I thought, wow, what a cool name. So you're cool not just in terms of the book, but also in your personal life. You add a little spice to little things. It's great.

Alison Fragale

Have fun with it.

Spencer Levy

Well, speaking of having fun with it, I really enjoyed your book, *Likeable Badass*. And I liked it in so many ways. Before I go into the nitty gritty of the various elements I liked, just tell us, in big picture terms, what the book's about.

Alison Fragale

The book is about status and status needs to be defined. Mostly we heard the term we use the term but when a psychologist like me talks about status, what we're talking about is um how much we are respected and regarded by other people. So if we talk about a person who we say no that's a high status person or that person has status what we're saying is other people in their world think highly of them highly regard them respect them and that's something that i've studied for a really long time, not just for women, but for everybody. And it's really important to a variety of things. It's important to career success. It's important to influence, because if people don't respect you, they'll never be influenced by you. And it is also just important to living a happy life in terms of life satisfaction. We know that people want to be respected in the relationships that matter to them. And when we are, life feels better. And when we're not, life is worse in a lot of measurable ways. So that's the core concept in the book that I introduced. Why I wrote the book is that we don't talk about that really important variable enough. It affects all of our lives, but we often can't label or name it. And then I talk a lot about where does that status come from? How do we influence our own status, meaning how do we get other people to respect our value? Why is that so important?

Spencer Levy

So I'm pretty sure that we have a very common definition of Likeable. I'm not sure our definition of badass is exactly the same. My definition of badass is different for a professional athlete, as it is for a business leader, as it is for another person. And you could be a badass in a lot of different ways. How do you define badass?

Alison Fragale

Okay, so I call this book *Likeable Badass*. I think it's catchy. I wrote it for women because I chose to do that, not because it's a gendered topic. And I do think at least for women, it represents what women will say. Yes, that is the vibe I am trying to give off at work at home and all my relationships. But it is a specific reference to how do these status decisions, how does respect, get decided? Meaning that you walk around all day, every day. And you encounter people, people that you actually know, people that you just see in the grocery store and people you might see online. And your brain is always updating and making decisions. What do I think of that person? Do I value them? Do I like them? Do I respect them? All these things. And your brain makes those decisions by focusing on two things. And these are the same two things that everybody is paying attention to when they focus on you. First two things are, What are your intentions toward me? Meaning, are you friend or are you foe? This is the most important thing that humans are wired to figure out about other humans. So, I always say it like this. You live in cave person times and an unknown cave person walks into your cave. The absolute most important thing you are gonna try to figure out is why are they there? Are they there because they are like dropping off some extra food they can't eat? Or are they because they wanna kill me and steal my food? So is this person that I'm about to interact with, do they care about other people such that they're going to make my life better or worse? First thing we always try to figure out. That is on the cover of the book, I call it Likeable. In psychology, we often talk about it as like our warmth or our other orientation, meaning like you are positively oriented toward other people. That's something we value a lot about people. We do not want to deal with difficult, selfish, harmful people. We want to deal with generous, honest, giving people. Okay, first thing we figure out. Second thing we need to figure out, this is where badass comes in, is can I rely on you? Are you capable? Are you good at what you do? So if I'm in the cave and I realize this is a very nice cave person, they are not here to hurt me. Second thing is—

Spencer Levy

If they can light a fire.

Alison Fragale

That's right! Do you have any skills that are gonna help me out? Because if you can't hunt, I'm not taking you with me because you're just gonna slow me down. So then we need to figure out.

Spencer Levy

Pause that for just a second. It's, you know, when you get to the basics about just survival, it's very different than when you get up to self-actualization. Am I oversimplifying this?

Alison Fragale

This is the same thing. So the idea here is that people value people who care and we value people who are capable because they're useful. Because in order for you to be useful to me, you have to want to help me and you have actually be able to help. That's the two things, okay? So that's Likeable and badass. Now, the reason in different contexts,

badass means different things is what does capable mean? Well capable means one thing if you're an athlete, it means something different if you are an accountant, it means different if you're in commercial real estate. Like what's useful. So it varies, but that's the basic idea is that when we believe that another human being wants to be helpful and has some unique skills and value that they can bring, what do we do? We respect them. Our brain says ding ding ding this is one of the good ones you should keep this one this one is really useful to you and we respect them. So when you start to pay attention to people, you start to recognize that you're always trying to figure these two things out. And these are the two things people wanna know about you. How do we win in our relationships? How do win at life? It's, I need to signal to everyone, as many people as possible, that I do care, my intentions are good, and that I've got useful skills that I can provide. Because that's when people say, okay, you're unique, you are valuable, I wanna give you things, I wanna interact with you. Like I wanna be in a relationship with you. And that's what Likeable and badass is referring to. And so in that sense, yes, when we go across jobs, contexts, the definition of what is useful will change. And therefore the definition of badass will change, but badass to me always means you have something of value to bring into this context.

Spencer Levy

Well, I will also say this with great respect. I believe strongly in branding. Not just personal branding, but like even the simplistic branding of the book, you have a great title. It's a very evocative title, and it really helps the brand.

Alison Fragale

Oh, 100%. I mean before I wrote this book,

Spencer Levy

Yeah.

Alison Fragale

I always said 80%, if that's probably an understatement, of the success of a book is the title. Every book that goes kind of viral, or people talk about, it has a title that like says what it is without having to explain it, but is also catchy. And I always joke that the underlying science of the Likeable and badass, the dimensions, in psychology is called the interpersonal circumplex of person-perception. So imagine if that were the title of the book, the book that no one would pick up ever. Interpersonal circumplex of person-perception. It basically means it's a circle with two axes in it on which it organizes our perceptions of people. I mean, this is how psychologists talk to each other. So 100%, but you have to be memorable. And so I, yes, I'm 100% there with you, which is you have to intend, like have something that people can catch on to, and remember, and see themselves in, get what it is, and then think I'll tell other people, and it makes them want to pick it up. Yes.

Spencer Levy

and maybe be a little mysterious. So we had on this show recently, the author of *Be More Pirate*. That's the whole title of the book. And you know what? It's catchy.

Alison Fragale

Totally catchy. And yes, you're right, that is a little mystery. You're like, what does it mean to "be more pirate"? I need to know. Yeah, 100%. That was my philosophy. In fact, I think about writing a second book, I always go title first. Titles matter, yeah.

Spencer Levy

There you go. So now let's get a little tactical. One of the things I've noticed is that the introverts, people that are more introverted, tend to be better public speakers than the extroverts. And why? You know, like, that doesn't make sense. It's because they'll use the techniques and actually apply them. The extroverts will have a tendency to wing it. What do you think?

Alison Fragale

I don't have an evidence-based answer of if that's true, but I trust your experience that that is true. And yes, I do think it's the idea of many of the things I teach are about art and science. Science, like there's rules. There are things that govern, do this more of this and less of this. And then there's the art piece, put your personal spin on how you do it. So I could buy that, which, and as an introvert myself, maybe that's why I'm successful. It's exhausting to be a public speaker when you're an introvert because you're like all the people. But the idea of I'm much more willing to think about, like, being coached by the science of it – like I'm willing to follow the rules. I could buy that.

Spencer Levy

Well, we're going to get to the science in just a moment. But I think this goes to two perspectives: yours and how people perceive you. And you can be whatever is the top of your field and whatever it is, but if people perceive you as differently, you're not, even if you in fact are. That's the key distinction, correct?

Alison Fragale

100%. And we've seen this other times, you see people who really, you think they don't bring a lot to the table, but their ability to manage perceptions is really good. And in fact, this is something that happened to me early in my career when I was working for McKinsey, which is what I was doing prior to getting my PhD, I worked with somebody who I didn't think was very talented, but he was a master at showing up and telling his story in a way that got everybody to really love him and value him. And I'm never encouraged anybody to do that. But I would say this audience doesn't need to worry about it. This audience has a lot of talent. And so you want to think about how to marry the two, all the work and the perception. And yes, if you are doing all of your things behind closed doors and no one sees it, then no one can possibly value it. So it's really about taking your authentic, natural work talent efforts and thinking one next step about how to show up and get credit for those in the eyes of an audience that you are going to need to collaborate with, and influence and interact with. And when that happens, all of those things are good for you, including your, again, just ability to feel good, because it doesn't feel good when somebody underestimates us. And we wanna be seen as we are. And so the more we can do that, then the better everything is.

Spencer Levy

Well, I think the longer I've been in this business, which as I get older is longer and longer, happiness is so important because I think so much of what we do is to fulfill the expectations of others, which is important because you're in an organization and you don't make all the rules. But nevertheless, if you can find the way to find happiness along the way, that's victory.

Alison Fragale

Well also, and you'll contribute longer because when people don't feel happy, they start to burn out a lot quicker and they start to exit sooner. So I always think those things do

matter. Even if you're solely focused on your contributions at work, and you're not thinking about the overall aspects of your life, the more satisfied you are, the more effort you'll put in, the longer you'll stay. And then when we think about that from a leadership perspective, we should care about those things for people who work for us. Because again, if they're content, they will stay longer and do their best work and that's good for our organization.

Spencer Levy

Well, one of my favorite and least favorite words in real estate is productivity. And the reason why I love it is if I could measure that word, the world would be beating a path to my door. But the problem is you can't, or it's very difficult to measure it, but you can do a survey and have proxies for productivity. And a proxy for productivity is happiness. And if somebody's happy, they're less likely to quit. They'll be more engaged. All these things happen if you're quote-unquote happy. I wish there was a better way to measure productivity, but I don't have it. Any thoughts there?

Alison Fragale

Well, it depends on what you're in. I mean, in some industries, you can measure productivity quite well. If you're actually producing widgets, then you can figure out how many we're making. But absolutely, right? In terms of putting effort in and then therefore generating output, you're going to have a variety of variables that are going to matter, right? Ability is going to be one, but satisfaction and an intrinsic joy of the work is one of the things that we know if we look at job design is an intrinsic motivator. So I enjoy what I'm doing is something that intrinsically motivates people to do work. Like, I have a sense of accomplishment. I can see something through from beginning to end. That motivates. Variety, I get to do a lot of different stuff. But anytime somebody has those things present, they're gonna be more motivated and engaged with the work, for sure.

Spencer Levy

So much of what we do in real estate takes a long time. And it's developing the relationships, it's getting the listing, it's selling the listing. I think soup to nuts at the average real estate, anything is six months. And then most of them are longer, right? What are my hobbies? Cooking, horse racing, why? Because I think people need to find sometimes those outlets for immediacy. Is that true?

Alison Fragale

Well, yeah, of course, because I mean, delay of gratification, right? We have to be able to think about things that are going to bring us joy, happiness, achievement now. Or we have to break things down into pieces that give us in a sense of accomplishment. So when we think about leaders, for example, if you have some endeavor, right, commercial real estate, and you say in order for you to feel like you got paid, or you achieved it, or you could check it off the list, or you can call it a win, or celebrate it and it's six months, nine months, 12 months, two years down the road, like my husband's in alternative investments, like stuff's decades. You have to be able to break it down because if you can't, people have to delay gratification for too long and they can't get any sense of progress. So I do think it's something that often we do for ourselves. You're talking about like, I do this for myself so that I can feel a sense of accomplishment, like I can make the brisket. But also you have to do it for other people. We are part of affecting their motivation, their productivity, their happiness, because if we don't break it down for them and we're leaving it to them to look at that goal that's really far in the future, yes, people will slow down and they will also be less satisfied because they can't see that they're making any progress.

Spencer Levy

Tell us about some of the science today. What's the science telling you today that's informing you about some of your opinions?

Alison Fragale

Psychology is really just the study of human beings and how people are similar and predictable. And we have different kinds of psychology, and I focus a lot on organizational. So I'm looking at primarily adults, primarily functional adults and primarily variables that are gonna be interesting at work. But work and life is a pretty blurred distinction, so a lot of these things matter just as much at home as they do at the office. So it's gonna be things like how do we influence people? How do we advocate? How do we make decisions? How do we motivate people? These are the things that often are like leaders will care about, or we'll care for ourselves in order to navigate our own career at work. Look, people don't evolve that quickly. So a lot of the things we talk about that really drive human behavior are things that we've known for a while, but we also are refining. The areas that I focus in are gonna be status, power, influence, negotiation, a lot about how do people advocate for themselves and how do they convince other people to do what they want them to do. That's just my general sandbox. And if you want to, and then we can talk specifically findings in any of that. But the science that I focus on that got me to write the book is this, again, this idea of status and also, and that status is really primary in our ability to be influential, much more so than we would think based on the information that we're pushing out to the public. So if you're not an academic, you're going to be curious about these things, right? You're going to read stuff, you are going to look at Harvard Business Review, or you're gonna read books written by other academics, many of whom have been on this show, or you are gonna watch TED Talks, or you gonna do things like this. And a lot of that stuff, we really teach people a lot about power. So to one of the first things you said about it not being about position or title, we often have coached people. To be power seeking in their life, which is okay, meaning to control more stuff, right? To get promoted, to be higher ranking, to be in charge of the budgets, to be able to make the decisions. And these are things that people value. And what's left out of that science and that conversation is the importance of respect in that process. So what I always say is resources follow respect. So if you are trying to get somebody to give you resources, whether you're getting them to try to invest in your deal, whether you are getting your boss to pay you more or give you more responsibility or more autonomy, the person you're trying to convince is gonna be very, very, very unlikely to give those resources if they do not look at you and think, I value this person. This is a caring, capable person who knows what they're doing and is gonna use the resources well, not just for their own gain, but for the collective benefit. If the person does not believe that, you're never gonna be successful. And so what we haven't been talking about in the science is how do we do that? Like, how do I sit across the table from somebody and get them to value me so that I can get those resources because a lot of that what we're doing is negotiating to try to get resources in any context, right? Commercial real estate or otherwise. So, that's the science I talk about.

Spencer Levy

So let's talk now more tactically, if we can, for just a moment.

Alison Fragale

Sure.

Spencer Levy

You have a phrase in here: “You do you.” Okay, that's right out of the book. What does that mean?

Alison Fragale

What it means is, so public speaking, we'll use this as an analogy, right? Cause everyone's done it, people care about it, right. You can see a bunch of speakers and they're all great, but they're not exactly the same. So there are rules that you cannot break. So you know, you should probably like make some eye contact with your audience sometime, right, that's probably good. You should probably speak so that people can hear you. But beyond that, you can have a style that can work for you. And you don't have to be good, completely mimicking someone else. But that doesn't mean that you can be any version of you that you want. So my full quote in the book is, “You do you strategically”, meaning there are going to be, in this case, I'm teaching people to earn the respect they deserve. There are some rules that are going to be best practice, but within those rules, you have a lot of personal latitude to show up in a way that feels very authentic. And figuring out the intersection of those two is gonna be when you're really successful. And so you've got to think about how do I do me? – but in a way that is going to give my audience what they want. And that's what you're trying to figure out. And you're figuring out the same thing, but you're not going to—if we had to give the same talk, you wouldn't give it exactly like I gave it, but we could give it equally effectively because we were focused on, I need to be able to give my audience what they need. And I need do it in a way that honors my style. And that what I try to teach people. And for certain populations. Women being one, where you have lower categorical status. So women in comparison to men will have less respect from the get-go. When you're in a situation like that, you often are told a lot, like, well, here's your problem. Here's what you should do differently. Change this, change that. And that often feels very demoralizing for people. Because they think I can't be myself. Everyone's telling me that who I am is not good enough and that's why I'm not getting the power and the respect. And I try to counteract that and say, there's still a lot of space for authenticity, but authenticity does not mean you can get on that stage and do any old thing you want and it's gonna work. No, you have to adapt, but not ever to the point that you've lost yourself. There's always a way to be yourself, but also serve your audience. Same thing here.

Spencer Levy

There's a term I use for that and I think you know the term too, it's called code-switching.

Alison Fragale

Yeah.

Spencer Levy

I change the way I communicate depending upon who's the audience. Not because I'm like three different people, because I want to communicate the message in a way that's most persuasive.

Alison Fragale

And sometimes with adults, people are resistant to this, and I find this a lot with women too, but I always, when I describe it in a parenting standpoint, everyone changes their mind. I said, I have three different kids. I talk to them differently. I parent them differently, why? Because I'm trying to actually drive the same results, but if I use the same strategies, it will work with one, it will backfire with the other, and the third one will ignore me. And so I have to switch who I am. And how I interact with them and how I talk to them because they are different and the audience is different, but I'm still trying to get the same outcome. And every parent who has multiple children will always agree, oh my god, I totally have to do

the same thing. I said, it's no different when you have people that you're working with or people that you are trying to influence. You have to show up a little bit differently. And what happens when we do it in the workplace is people often think it means I'm inauthentic. And I said, would you ever consider yourself an inauthentic parent because you use two different strategies with two different kids? No, you'd think of yourself as a genius. You'd be like, I am the most brilliant parent ever. Look what I did. I got two totally different kids to do the same thing with two, different strategies. So it's the same idea with your non-relatives. It's brilliant. It's not inauthentic. To be able to switch the way you're showing up. And just like with parenting, you're never getting to the point where you're not you, you're still you, it's just different versions. And that's the thing that I help people really think about when they're building respect with their audiences is, yeah, you can shift – still authentic, and also still strategic, still driving the result you want.

Spencer Levy

But the one thing that I really fight – and I say this with love to my friends who sometimes push back on this – I want it to be my voice. I'm just very particular about that, being my voice, because I think that once people smell it's not your voice, you lose authenticity and you may lose audience.

Alison Fragale

Yeah, it does have to be you. And I've, like, had to figure this out. Like, what is my voice actually? Like, What is me and what is not? And sometimes you don't even know even when you're the one creating it. But you figure that out with time and practice. And I'm a huge proponent as the professor in me is a huge component of practice, like leadership of any variety is a learned skill. You get better with reps and you have to create reps for yourself in everyday life. So whether that's speaking, you need reps. Whether it's posting on social, you need reps. And whether it's being influential, you need reps. In the book, in itself, you saw, like, there's a lot of opportunities and coaching people on practicing, and to figure out what I call your swing thoughts. So I'm not a golfer, but I had a student who was a golfer once. She was a collegiate golfer. And she basically said, every golfer can name, even a professional golfer, 10 things about their swing that should be better than they are. But what your coaches will tell you is, don't you dare work on all 10 of them at once. You can pick one and you have to let the other nine just continue to suck like they currently suck and you work on one. And then when that one is now fixed, you can take another one. And that's how I coach people to think about speaking, leadership, status, whatever, is pick a swing thought. Pick one thing that you wanna try to get better at and let all the other stuff go. And when that new thing becomes like, feels like it's now a habit and you've got it, then you can go back and pick something else.

Spencer Levy

Here's a place where I'm going to politely disagree with you a little bit, because a lot of people think, oh, it's all reps. And reps do matter, but if you don't have the right technique, a million reps are never gonna make you great. They may make you good, they will never make you great.

Alison Fragale

100%. No, we agree. You can't practice incorrectly, because all you're doing is reinforcing the wrong stuff. The reps have to be good form, like good science, good art, etc. But once you have it, you will get better with practice. So like I teach people to negotiate and one of my big things, which I'm also talking about with my kids is: You have to negotiate things that don't matter. Because in life, when you encounter something little, and it doesn't it's really easy to be like, I don't care. I'll just let it go. But when you do that, what that means

is the only time you're sitting down to advocate for yourself is when the stakes feel high and then you have no reps. So I said, you have to—like I was telling my kids, like I'm talking to my daughter when she ordered something in a coffee shop and the order was incorrect. I was trying to get her to actually, like, politely speak up and say it wasn't what she had ordered. Not because I cared and if it were me, I'd be like, I don't care. I'll drink the thing anyway. But I was try to explain to her, if you don't do these things or you're too scared because you don't think you can do them appropriately. Then when you have something that really matters, you have no practice whatsoever. So you have to rep the things, just like practice. You're not just gonna practice golf when you practice in tournaments. That's never gonna work. You have to practice in these low stakes situations. So what I would encourage people is to think about how do you create low stakes situations for yourself to practice these skills that then you wanna be able to bring in high stakes situations? So you're not gonna just become a better speaker by doing the one annual meeting a year. You've got to find little opportunities in between.

Spencer Levy

So Alison, while this book applies to everyone, it was written for women. And in fact, there's many quotes in here I can go to and this is what I think is controversial. And maybe it's my perception, but I'm just going to read it. It says, quote, "I'm just one of the guys. Stop thinking about the fact that you're a woman. If a woman wants her gender to be irrelevant to others, then she shouldn't consider it relevant or really consider it at all." I found that controversial. Tell us about that quote.

Alison Fragale

Yeah, so that's not my quote. That's Amy Trask, who was, and I think maybe still is considered the highest ranking woman in the NFL, she had an office position. And so that was part of her book, which was called something like *You Negotiate Like a Girl*, and it was about her reflections working in a super male dominated industry as essentially the first woman to get to that level. This was her philosophy on this. And what I was saying about that was that that's how a lot of people my age older who, women, were coached to think about. Opening doors and having opportunities was like, just don't worry about that whole gender thing. Just go out there and just, like, act like one of the guys. And what I wrote about in the book is the reason that that is problematic is this idea of your audience. It doesn't matter what you care about. It matters what your audience cares about. And that's true in any domain, again, speaking real estate, whatever. What your audience is focused on is what you have to address, and what I know as a psychologist is that people's brains pay attention to gender. They pay attention to race. They pay attention to all kinds of things. And so you need to know that. And you need to understand that that person's brain might be focusing on something that you don't consider very relevant, but it's not working to your advantage because their brain is valuing you less because they're picking up on something in their non-conscious brain. And you have to understand that and you have to understand how to be smart about how you show up to get that brain to say, You're not trying to do this. But you might be devaluing me, but I'm gonna stop it because I'm very valuable and I'm going to get you to see it. So that's really what that was about, was that sometimes we project things that we care about and presume if it's not important to us, it's important to other people. And there are many women of my generation and older who had that narrative told to them and then think they're not very aware of it. And that can be really to your detriment because if you are assuming that no one cares about it, well, we know from psychology, that's not true.

Spencer Levy

I'm going to read a couple more quotes and then we'll wrap it up because it's been a great conversation. I can speak to you for hours. So quote, "Likeable Badass mindset: I love my inner imposter. As long as she's with me, I know I'm reaching for the stars." What do you mean?

Alison Fragale

I talk in the book about various stories we tell ourselves, particularly around gender, that are not helpful for building status. So the one is, I'm just one of the guys. Like, I'm not different than anyone else. So we covered that one. The other one is: I'm an imposter. So when people do not feel like they are worthy of respect, it's pretty hard to show up in ways that are going to get you more respect. So I just talk about the idea that imposter syndrome is not something we should make go away. It's actually a sign of a good thing, which is a sign that we have really high goals. And that we are reaching for things and achieving things. And that we want some imposter feeling because it means that we're striving for something beyond where we currently are, which is gonna drive us, our success, our performance, our achievement. And so this idea of learning to enjoy a bit of that imposter-feeling rather than make it go away. So I don't put it in the book, but I use the analogy of sore muscles after a workout. You work out, next day you're sore. It doesn't really feel fun to be sore. No one likes it. But you do feel a bit of a satisfaction of: I can clearly tell I worked out sufficiently yesterday because I got this soreness. So there is a little bit of positive pride in the whole thing. Same thing with the imposter syndrome. Doesn't particularly feel good, but oh, why do I feel this way? That's 'cause I'm reaching for things. I'm pushing, I'm driving. You should feel proud of that. And that's how I try to coach women to reframe it rather than think, oh, if I feel this way, I did something wrong.

Spencer Levy

What's next? You wrote such a terrific book. What would you like to do next?

Alison Fragale

You know what? I'm really doing it right now. I mean, there will be a next. But right now what I've been doing is really taking this kind of content and enjoying going into audiences, different audiences, meeting different groups like this, but also doing a lot of, again, a lot of audiences of women, to help like bring behavioral science to them. So I think what's going to happen is it's still going to be me. It's just going to take a variety of different forms. Will I write another book? Maybe it's like a 2026 kind of decision. But speaking to groups, putting out content in new forms, things like that, that's where I'm going right now.

Spencer Levy

Well, Alison Fragale, author of *Likeable Badass*. Please read it. UNC professor at the business school, Chicago resident, what a terrific guest, Alison.

Alison Fragale

My pleasure, anytime.

Spencer Levy

If you're interested in *Likeable Badass*, the episode archive on our website has a variety of other perspectives on business, career-making and more. Those conversations include bestsellers such as *Be More Pirate* author Sam Conniff and renowned organizational psychologist Adam Grant, as well as a host of other compelling thought leaders, professors and authors. You can find them on our website, CBRE.com/TheWeeklyTake, and on the podcast platforms where you find the show. We've got lots more coming up too, as our new season is just getting started, including our annual Market Outlook for 2026.

For now, thanks for joining us. I'm Spencer Levy. Be smart. Be safe. Be well. And happy new year.