

Interviewee: Amy Ebesson  
Interviewers: Hayley Martinez and Kendal Roy  
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Transcribers: Hayley Martinez and Kendal Roy



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**Abstract:**

Amy Beth Ebbeson was born in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1969 and grew up in the nearby town of Holden. She attended the Wachusett School District from elementary school through high school graduation in 1987. Amy received her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology at Roger Williams University in and earned her Master's Degree in Social Work at Boston University. Amy currently lives in Rutland, Massachusetts, right outside of Worcester with her husband and 12 year -old son. Amy worked in the Sociology and Health Department at Worcester State University for the past 17 years before recently moving to Wheelock College's satellite campus at the College of the Holy Cross. There she is currently teaching a social work program. In this interview, Amy discusses her challenges and expectations she has faced as a woman in the workforce. Amy shares her experiences working in social services and what her occupation means to her. She reflects on how Worcester has changed as the city has developed over her lifetime. Amy emphasized how she wants to use her experiences in social work and the knowledge she has obtained over the years to benefit the Worcester community.

**KR:** We are completing a city- wide oral history of the lives of Worcester women aiming to collect stories about a broad range of experiences. Based on the goals of the 1850 National Woman's Rights Convention in Worcester, we are focusing on the areas of women's education, health, work and politics. Thank you for helping us with... Thank you for your help with this important project.

**HM:** Okay, so the first questions are going to be about your general family or Worcester. What is your full name including both maiden name and married name, if applicable?

**AE:** Amy Beth Ebesson, and that is my--- never had any other names [laughs]. And was that all you asked? Alright, great!

**HM:** And then, where were you born?

**AE:** Worcester.

**HM:** Did you go to public school or private school?

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**AE:** I did, I grew up in Holden, which is, you know, is just right over there. So, it was in Wachusett School District, is the suburbs of Worcester school district. And, yes, I went my whole life, everything in Worcester.

**KR:** So, you've never lived far away?

**AE:** I actually-- - I went to Boston University for my master's degree and Roger Williams in Rhode Island for my undergrad [undergraduate degree]. So, I tried another state, but... [laughs] And I've traveled and stuff, but I definitely have lots of love for Worcester.

**KR:** Awesome!

**HM:** That's awesome. Okay, and then have you ever married?

**AE:** Yes, I am currently married.

**HM:** Okay, what is the name of your husband?

**AE:** Jonathon Marian.

**HM:** Do you have any children?

**AE:** I do have one child, Benjamin. He is 12 years old.

**HM:** Next question was do you have grandchildren, but [laughs]...

**AE:** Not yet!

**HM:** I was like ah, think I'm going to hold off on that! What culture/ethnicities do you identify with? So, your family background...

**AE:** My families--- growing always considered ourselves mostly Scandinavian and Swedish in heritage. It is probably a later question, but my great -grandfather came over from Sweden to work at Norton Company, which is one of the biggest, was at least for many decades one of the biggest employers. It was completely started by Swedes and they---- you probably already realize there is a really big Swedish community in Worcester and it really is because of Norton Company just was this magnet. People would come over and already have a job, or they would say, you know, we're going to hire you when you come here. So, a lot of people came from Sweden to work at Norton.

**KR:** Cool, I didn't know that. That's interesting.

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**HM:** Can you tell me a little bit about your parents?

**AE:** Yes, my dad is from Worcester. He's--- my great -grandfather--- they all lived in Worcester. My mom's from Albany, New York. My dad went to Union College in New York, and that's where my parents met. He--- they were very young. My mother was 18 and my dad was 20.

**KR:** And then they moved to Worcester after?

**AE:** Yeah, they came back to Worcester and they divorced. Shocking, right, when they got married at 20 [laughs]? They divorced, and my mom went back to Albany, but we stayed in Worcester.

**HM:** Can you spell the name of the college?

**AE:** Union, U-N-I-O-N. It's in --- that is a little harder to spell. - is S-Schenectady. It will be easy for you to look up because it is a pretty big city and that's a pretty well-known school. But, yeah, I guess if you've never heard of it, you've never heard of it [laughs].

**HM:** So, were they both students at Union College?

**AE:** My dad was a student at Union College, my mom was going to community college in that same area. It was like Colony Community College or something. Outside of Schenectady is kind of outside Albany. Not too far from Albany, which is the capital city of ---believe it or not, it's the capital city of New York, not New York [City].

**KR:** I would never have known that! [laughs].

**AE:** Right, Albany is the capital of New York, not New York, New York. 'Cause of course we think, New York, New York but it's not.

**KR:** Wow, I did not know that.

**AE:** Look at all the things I'm teaching you guys today!

**KR:** We're only 10 minutes in, and we're learning so much!

**HM:** What are they doing now?

**AE:** My mother is not employed. My father is retired. And he actually remarried 20 something years ago. My step- mother also worked at Norton Company. They met at Norton Company. They both worked at Norton Company. She also had generations of her parents before her working for Norton Company. It was when--- a really, really family orientated place. Had I

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wanted to work there, I would have just been able to work there because my dad did. They had that kind of set up where if a parent worked there, you automatically could work there pretty much as long as you wanted. Some of it is the times, it's not like that anymore, but people would work there their whole lives. That is the only job my father and my step-mom ever had.

**HM:** And your mom is in Albany?

**AE:** Yes.

**HM:** Where have you lived during your life? So, did you grow up in Worcester, you were saying Holden?

**AE:** Yup, Holden. So, we--- mostly around here, with the exception of my four years of undergrad [undergraduate] in Bristol, Rhode Island, and my two plus--- I think I lived in Boston for three years.

**KR:** Do you like Boston or Worcester better?

**AE:** I--- Worcester. There is a lot I liked about Boston, but it's so much more fast pace. I like it a little more chill. It is really fun to be there, it is exciting and stimulating 'cause there's so much going on. But it's nice to like...

**KR:** Nice to visit.

**AE:** Right, yeah, I'm not all that super city kind of girl. I like the amenities of the city, but not the loud, constant mood. You know, it's not very Zen.

**HM:** So, growing up in Holden, what was your neighborhood generally like?

**AE:** It was one of those really cookie cutter, all the houses were--- it was like one of the cheesy subdivisions where most all the houses look exactly the same. It was a nice place to grow up. It was ---those times, too, were before people realized how scary and dangerous the world could be. So we--- no cell phones or anything like that. It was designed so that kids could really play. They had all those cul-de-sac kind of neighborhoods, cars weren't really going through. You could really hangout with neighborhood kids.

**KR:** That's awesome.

**AE:** There was a lot of--- it was a pretty big subdivision so there were lots of kids that lived around.

**HM:** Did you play outside with them and hang out a lot?

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**AE:** Yeah, it's pretty cool. There is a lot of woods outside of Worcester. So, I did a lot of --- and I am honestly so grateful for that. I think if I had lived more inner city, I probably would have gotten myself in a lot of trouble. 'Cause I didn't have my---very--- my--- when my parents divorced, it was just my mom, my sister and I. And she had a lot of mental health issues, and wasn't particularly attentive to what was going on with us. So, we were really free ranged kids [laughs]. But having the woods--- I feel completely safe in the woods, it was beautiful, it's peaceful, it was fun, climbing trees, jumping--- there was water, you could swim. So, it was really a nice geographic area to grow up in.

**HM:** Where do you live in the city now and have you lived in multiple areas of the city?

**AE:** I live in Rutland actually, right now, which is right, also right outside of Worcester. It's just kind of a bit beyond the airport. And I--- when my parents got divorced in the mid 80's, my dad bought this middle of the woods hunting cabin and that--- it's not a hunting cabin anymore. I've built where that hunting cabin is, but I've built where that piece of property –with my husband, my son and our two dogs and our cat.

**KR:** That's awesome.

**AE:** It is really nice. It's on a pond, so how cool is that. We have a nice little--- it's a little scenic. I don't know how much you've explored around here, but there are lots of bigger than puddle-sized ponds, but they are surrounded by woods. It's like a reservoir back up, so it's not busy. It's serene. It is funny cause it's really--- until recently I worked at Worcester State [University] and it's like a 10 minute drive to Worcester State, but you feel like you're in the deep woods of New Hampshire or Maine. It's kind of cool at how quickly you can be out of the city.

**HM:** Do your other family members live in the same area as you?

**AE:** No, my sister lives in the Midwest. She lives in Minnesota.

**HM:** Is she your only sibling?

**AE:** Yes.

**HM:** How old is she?

**AE:** Forty-five.

**HM:** Are you the younger one?

**AE:** I'm the oldest.

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**HM:** What challenges do you think the city still faces and what would you change about the city?

**AE:** That's hard to just pin it down to one. I hate to say. I love Worcester and I think there is a lot of great things going on in Worcester. But, one thing that I am involved with now is this grant project. We got this federal grant to do like youth and gang violence stuff, mine is a little branch of that. So, I am very much aware of some of the problems we have in the city for young adults with--- not having good recreation areas, getting involved in gangs. There is a lot of poverty in Worcester. For a little while I worked at the Boys and Girls Club. So, working there it was really obvious to me how bad some of the kids--- they're in single parent households, if that, with lots of other kids living there. Their dad's in jail and their aunties got shot. They had really--- their lives have been touched by a lot of violence. We got that grant because, I think it was about three summers ago, there was this one summer where there were like young people shooting at each other, every weekend there was a death. It was really horrifying. It was a lot of the "You got my friend, so I'm gonna get you," all the retaliation stuff. Which is why we got this big grant, but it was kind of a horrible circumstance to watch young adults go through.

**HM:** So, you would say the things you would change about it would probably be the gang violence and poverty?

**AE:** Yeah, well poverty, poverty is not just a Worcester problem, it's a huge problem. But definitely our whole country is experiencing it, and Worcester is a microcosm. But disparity of wealth, really the chasm is growing and growing. And that's always kind of been the--- you know, there is some really wealthy people in Worcester, but there is a lot of people that are barely scrapping by.

**HM:** Definitely. Okay, so the next one is, what changes have you seen in Worcester over time?

**AE:** I have --- one of the things I love about Worcester is it is a very innovative place. It's one of those things where if you're from Worcester, you're in --- it's one degree of separation from everybody you meet in Worcester. Even probably with you guys, I'm sure if we took the time we could find people we know in common because you're in Worcester right now. And because of that, I think there is a fair amount of trust between people that work in social service settings, medical settings, and because there is that trust, people can do great things. When you were talking about the background of the project, that big launch event Women 2000 that they had to celebrate the [1850] Women's History Convention, they had this huge event and the woman who was mostly responsible for that was somebody I grew up with, Lisa Cook. Lisa Connolly Cook. So that kind of thing is really --- has helped me so much. I know women in Worcester who have achieved amazing things. So, I have always felt like things are possible here in Worcester.

**HM:** What distinct characteristics make Worcester the place that it is?

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**AE:** One of the things I always say is that I think Worcester is really diverse and --- when I was in Boston, I was studying social work and you have to do field work, a lot of field work in that program. I had a job in Dorchester Juvenile Court. So, I would get on the train at B.U. [Boston University] and go to Dorchester. When I got on the train, it was all white and by the time I got to Dorchester, I was the only white person on the train and vice versa. Worcester, I don't think, is like that. In Boston it was like, here's the Black neighborhood, here's the Hispanic neighborhood, here's the Asian neighborhood, here's the Italian neighborhood. It was really --- everybody coexists peacefully more in Boston than they do here, but here we're together. And I think that causes more tension at times. Historically had--- just I think a year or two ago, well [President] Barack [Obama] was still in office we had ---- 'cause they felt like it could be a racism power... So, but it isn't. It's really easy to mind your own business when you're not interacting with other people. But Worcester, I don't think there is at all, there's poor neighborhoods, but they are not really split along racial lines and I think that is one thing I love about Worcester.

**KR:** That's really interesting, I never thought of it like that.

**AE:** Yeah.

**HM:** What do you think women's experience in Worcester has been generally?

**AE:** Well, one--- when I was 20, I was in a leadership program that the YW [YWCA]. And that to me--- I think that's what's so great about Worcester. I think Worcester intentionally mentors young people. The agencies I've been involved with have been mostly headed by women. So, Linda Cavioli at the YW is incredible. She has just been there for a long time. She's done so much domestic violence work, child care work, policy stuff. So, she is like one of my role models. Doctor Castille, Maddie Castille, is the Commissioner of Health and Human Services for the city of Worcester. She is another one of my big mentors. She's done so many cool things for the city. She has the Hector Reyes house. She started the Latin American Health Alliance. And she runs a house that is for Hispanic men out of jail and in recovery for addiction. And then from there she--- because she was having such a hard time figuring out how to get her guys jobs, they opened a restaurant on the bottom of Shrewsbury Street, The Reyes Café. So, the guys in recovery have a job 'cause they can go work in the restaurant. So, things like that are so innovative and cool. I always kind of feel like, wow if people knew the things we were doing in Worcester... And I feel like we can do those things because it's such small townie at the top that you can get key people on the phone easily. People are willing to collaborate with you. I think, I feel like we just get a lot of cool things done.

**HM:** So, you would say the young people have been educated well and Worcester tries to focus on that?

**AE:** I think they do. I do think that--- especially the YW is always doing stuff for young women. There's---the United Way has a big fund specifically designated for girls and women. I think that there's a big push in Worcester. The women in Worcester aren't just going to be quiet and go away. They're --- they stand up and ask for things and accomplish things. They're pretty visible, so that's really cool.

**KR:** So, our next section is on your education.

**AE:** Alright!

**KR:** So, you mentioned where you attended school, Roger Williams for your undergrad and Boston University for your master's [degree]?

**AE:** Yup.

**KR:** And what'd you study for your master's?

**AE:** Social work.

**KR:** Social work and what was your undergrad?

**AE:** Psychology.

**KR:** What were your challenges in education?

**AE:** Well, what I do right now is I am running a social work program for Wheelock College based at Holy Cross. But when I was doing grad school, I figured out that I wanted to do social work, but we did not at that time have social work in Worcester. Which was a bummer for me because so much of the social work is the stuff that I was talking about, building the relationships, knowing the lay of the land, who's doing what, what kind of services are offered to who. And so, had I been able to do my degree in Worcester, that would have been awesome, but it was great to go to Boston. I felt much more like--- I think it was good for confidence to kind of feel like you could be successful in a bigger city than Worcester. But also, you were putting energy into relationships that were really short- term. Whereas here I am very cognizant of like, I'm going to see--- I'm staying in Worcester for the rest of my life, and seeing these people again and again. I don't want to fall out with this one or that, there's a value placed on relationships in Worcester that I think is really great. The only challenge, well apart from the cost of it, Boston University. I definitely still have a lot of debt from having gone to Boston University. I think when you're in your early 20's, you're not thinking about I'm going to have to pay this back and it's going to be really burdensome. You're thinking like, oh yeah, sure I'll take all the loans I can get. I think that is something that should be recognized as a culture that people kind of prey on right--- like when I was in undergrad too, pretty much every day they'd have credit card booths---

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[in mocking tone] “Take out as much as you want, spend all this money.” There was this belief that at some point young people were going to have good jobs, so give them all they want, they’ll be able to pay it off. I don’t even think they are allowed to do that anymore.

**KR:** Yeah, I don’t think. I know someone mentioned that there used to be booths where you could sign up for credit cards and stuff.

**AE:** All the time. They’d give you chocolate bars to sign up.

**KR:** Yeah, I definitely heard that.

**AE:** They would like throw them at you. Right ‘cause it was really scummy almost.

**KR:** Right, it’s not fair. Do you regret going to Boston University because of the debt you have now?

**AE:** I don’t know. I think I really did get a good education. One of the things that’s going on right now--- Wheelock is a pretty small school in Boston, and we just found out earlier this month that B.U. is kind of looking to take us over, [laughs] so I do feel like in this one instance having the connections to BU will hopefully be valuable, but I don’t know.

**KR:** That is very true.

**AE:** Right, at least they’re not going to think I’m useless if they educated me [laughs]. So, I see some value in that I’d like to think!

**KR:** So, when you finished your formal education, what did you see as your options? Did you see options back in Worcester?

**AE:** Absolutely. I always intended to come back to Worcester. Mostly because the cost of living was killing me in Boston. Within social services, I had a job while I was in Boston, but it was a \$30,000 a year job. Which would be fine in Worcester, but you really can’t live on---like that would cover the rent, and that’s about it. I pretty quickly moved back to Worcester just because I knew I would be able to navigate that a lot easier.

**KR:** And when you got back to Worcester, what support networks and mentoring have been important to you?

**AE:** Right out of high school, I started working at the Devereux School, which is a school for kids with emotional disabilities. I did work there all through my undergraduate and kind of had a pause while I was getting my graduate degree. But I knew the lay of the land of human services well enough to feel like I would always have a job. And I still feel like--- I don’t feel confident

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that I'll always have a job I love, that's great paying, but I feel pretty confident that I will always be able to get a job in human services. So that is a good pull. And like I said before, I had ---went through leadership programs that the city put on. I have seen that. I do feel like Worcester gets that they need to build leaders. That has really been a part of who I am in terms of feeling that sense of obligation to younger women coming up because I got so much help. I feel like I got to do the same, right? And I feel like that's really cool about our community. I think this--- I a community that--- I also think there's such a high tolerance of weirdness in Worcester that I love. Like this is a let your freak flag fly kind of city. We are really tolerant. A lot of times --- one of the jobs I had before working at Worcester State, I worked for the Department of Mental Health. So, it's not --- we really do have a disproportionate number of people with mental illness in this city. This is a weird little Worcester history thing. Worcester State Hospital is the first only psychiatric hospital in the country. Like every other place might have a psych ward but it was the first hospital just dedicated to people with mental illness. And so, because it was the first one, everybody in the country who could, sent their mentally ill relative to Worcester. So, Worcester had--- it was a magnet ---you probably did know or hear about Sigmund Freud. Worcester is the only place he came to in the U.S. He did a U.S. tour and it was because of Worcester State Hospital. Clark [University] always says it was because of them, which I am sure that was part of it. He spoke at Clark. But it was much more about the fact that we had Worcester State Hospital.

**KR:** Wow, yeah fun fact! I didn't know that either.

**AE:** Right, and then there was that whole wave of deinstitutionalizing people. So they're like, "Oh, man we can't warehouse all these sick people in this hospital anymore." But they didn't really have a system in place, so there's a lot of homeless, mentally ill people in Worcester, too, like a lot. And it's not--- when I worked for the Department of Mental Health, I would be with other case managers and we'd drive around and be like, "There's one of ours." "There's one of ours." "There's one of ours." So, it still is, I think, a challenge Worcester faces is having a lot of people with major mental illness that may or may not be getting their needs met in the service system.

**HM:** Do you think that's because we were the first psychiatric hospital?

**AE:** Yep! So, if your family sent you from California to Worcester, 'cause they wanted you locked up... When they let out, those guys didn't go back to California. They stayed right here. I don't think they would have the capacity to get back to where they were from. So, we really do have--- it's not just people's imagination. There is a disproportionate number of people with mental illness in this city.

**HM:** That makes a lot of sense.

**AE:** Right, you see it now. Right, 'cause I think you do notice it.

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**HM:** Yeah and being at Assumption we are in this neighborhood. And then you go to different neighborhoods and stuff. And then you get kind of like--- I stayed here for the summer so I got to kind of see everything not just, oh the bubble.

**AE:** Right, this cute little bubble that we keep our students safe in. It really is--- and I think that is true for most--- maybe not Worcester State, but I think a lot of the Worcester colleges really try---Holy Cross! Like holy mackerel that place is like a gated community. You got to go through the guard shack, and there's big huge gates, and all these one-way streets. It really is--- you don't see people that don't belong there. It's a pretty homogenous student group. It's not all that diverse. And they really don't seem to leave campus much and why would you? It's this gorgeous campus with everything you could ever want right there.

**HM:** Exactly.

**AE:** So, they're happy in their little bubble! And banging views of the city, too! That's like--- I still just can't get over it. Wow! The city looks really good from way up there [laughs].

**HM:** Seriously!

**AE:** You can't see any of the grime or homeless people living in alleyways.

**HM:** Okay, so next questions are going to be more focused on work. So, what was your first job?

**AE:** The Devereux School, that was the school for kids with emotional problems.

**KR:** Can you spell that?

**AE:** D-E-V-E-R-E-U-X.

**KR:** Alright.

**AE:** Always tricky when its spelt with an x. But Devereux is actually a national chain, too. We have--- their main office is in Pennsylvania. But they do mostly kids' stuff, but they do a lot of mental health type programs.

**HM:** How did you find that job?

**AE:** They sent a recruiter to my high school. Yeah. It was---I think that--- to go back to the part where I was like, "I know I'll always have a job," At that time they needed people so badly. If you had a pulse, you could work there. There wasn't really any requirements at all. They're like, "great! You want to do this work?" And you didn't really get any training either. It was--- the training was literally like, "Watch Marcy, she's really good!" And Marcy was really good! I still

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know Marcy, she still does that work. But, like it wasn't--- I often feel a little bit sad about doing that work with no training at all, with no understanding about mental illness really. And I just felt like wow, I really could have done a lot better if I had an idea about--- like we had kids with really serious obsession compulsive disorder. And you know, you would just get frustrated like "Stop it! Cut it out." I didn't really get what was going on in their head. And you personalize it. Like, "Why can't you just stop?" And then you learn more about OCD [Obsessive Compulsive Disorder] and you're like, "Oh man, I was a jerk. That kid couldn't help that." So that was my first job. Working there through my bachelor's degree did--- I thought I might want to do special ed. [special education] 'cause I was kind of watching the special-ed teachers like, [whispers] "I could do better than them." I didn't [laughs]. I tried special-ed for a little while and I was like "Ooo, this is really hard." It actually really--- I felt like I got to a place where I really understand behaviorism. And behaviorism, believe it or not, works incredibly well in almost any setting with kids. You pretty much directly get what you reward [laughs]. Right. So, I was good because I got that. So, I would reward, you know, "You are doing such a good job right now! Thank you so much!" And then the other kids would be like, "Oh I want to!" So, I felt like I could really get a good handle on kids' behaviors and that's why they let me try that teaching job. But then once the kids were good, I was like, "Psh, now what do I do? I have no idea how to teach them!" [laughs]. Right? Like I'm supposed to teach kids how to read? Woah! Scary! [laughs].

**HM:** That's so funny. How long did you work there for?

**AE:** Like, so many years. And a lot of on and off. It was one of those things where every school break they'd let you get in as many hours as you want. And you guys know, you really can't work that much while you're in school, except on those breaks. You're banging out those shifts just for the money of it. And you know it was--- you could cram a lot--- you got overtime if you worked after a certain--- so you could make a lot of money, if you were willing to just work, work, work, work, work. And that is---that setting is where I learned about social work and what social workers do. So yeah, after doing that for a while, that did leave me to want to get a master's in social work.

**HM:** Okay, so you worked at Devereux for a long time?

**AE:** For a long time. Like '87 to about '94.

**HM:** Okay, and you started working there.

**AE:** Right out of high school, yeah. And did the pop in while I was in school in Rhode Island. I would come home on weekends and vacations to just get the hours.

**HM:** What other jobs have you had?

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**AE:** From Devereaux I also worked at The Bridge of Central Mass [Massachusetts] which is another, another vendor that has services for people with mental illness. And then I worked for the Department of Mental Health, which was kind of a cool---nice chance to do social work, but have it really by nine to five and not like crisis. So that was fun. But working for the state was a challenge because it's very bureaucracy--- it's a huge state bureaucracy. So, you know, people talk about those DMH [Department of Mental Health] jobs --- the golden handcuffs. You are not going to be able to make the money you make with the hours you work anywhere else, so as lame and oppressive as it can be, you feel stuck there. But then after I got my social work degree, I was able to do a lot of consulting which was really fun. So, you get to see a lot of different agencies and do all this stuff. That kind of got me into Worcester State where I was for 17 years teaching at Worcester State.

**HM:** Wow.

**KR:** What classes did you teach there?

**AE:** Mental health, drugs and society, health counsel, counseling health kind of stuff. I worked in both the Sociology Department and the Health Department. Which I didn't even really know what public health was, but turns out it's a lot like social work [laughs]. But it was great. I loved teaching at Worcester State. The awesome thing about Worcester State is that we really got super diverse students. We got people from all over the world. I mostly worked with a lot of non-traditional students. So, like middle-aged adults that got to that point in their career where they weren't ever going to get promoted without a bachelor's degree, people that grew up poor and working class and barely getting by, and of course, they are going to go to a public school because it's just so much cheaper than anything else. But that was awesome! I had one class semester--- I had like a kid from Haiti, a guy from Bulgaria, couple people---Kenya. Just amazing to have this global community of students, it's pretty cool.

**HM:** Yeah, I took two classes at Worcester State and going to class here compared to there was completely different.

**AE:** Yeah.

**HM:** They didn't care who you were--- they could be like--- like I saw everything there and then here is very standard, I feel.

**AE:** Right. Yeah, Holy Cross is like that too. Worcester State you get such a huge range of age, of race, of grooming. You get everything. Right. There isn't a sense of everybody is noticing you. But, at Holy Cross even the social work students we have are older than their norm. So even, kind of middle-age suburban.. You stand out at Holy Cross because it is so homogenous.

**HM:** Definitely. So, you work now at Wheelock?

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**AE:** Yeah. Wheelock has a--- it's a Holy Cross their satellite program. So, it's a Wheelock program, but housed at Holy Cross.

**KR:** So, do you work for Wheelock, just at Holy Cross?

**AE:** Yeah, exactly. They--- we had worked--- we had the Wheelock program at Anna Maria for five years because Anna Maria has a Bachelor's of Social Work. If you do--- one of the things about social work is you have to a lot of field for that degree, it is a really clinical degree. People have to watch you working with people. And so if you have a Bachelor's in Social Work, you have already got a chunk of it towards your master's, so it becomes a much easier bachelor's to get if you did it at ---- cause you already did the field work. So, they had a Bachelor's in Social Work, and so we had a master's, so it was a nice fit. But then they just in this last year decided they were going to do their own master's program. So, they kicked Wheelock out. Obviously, you don't want your competition under your roof. But that--- it was great for us honestly because Holy Cross is just a much more beautiful environment.

**KR:** Yeah.

**AE:** Have you been out to Anna Maria? It's fine. It's very--- it looks like a veteran's house. You know those halls where you go to dance? It looks very '50's, kind of outdated. It's not very big. It's like three or four buildings. Its super white, it's really isolated. So, it wasn't the most dynamic, exciting social work --- place to have a social work program. But, you know it was fine.

**HM:** Upgrade pretty much!

**KR:** Yeah.

**AE:** Yeah [laughs].

**KR:** What made you make the switch from Worcester State to this new job?

**AE:** The Trump election [laughs]. Honestly. Believe it or not. I loved Worcester State, I still love Worcester State. Mostly 'cause I loved the students there. But when, when [President Donald] Trump got elected, I felt a lot more I wasn't with my people than I ever had before. You know what I mean? I felt like most other professors were pretty open-minded, liberals, seemed like they shared my values. But then--- that Trump thing made me feel like, "Oh, I'm wrong." These are not people--- one --- a colleague said to me, "How about our precious little snowflake students needing counseling after the election results?" And I was like, "Gasp, you're a white Catholic man with a PhD [Doctor of Philosophy]. For you it doesn't feel scary or dangerous. If you're an illegal alien, child of an immigrant, or you're a person of color, you are not --- they're

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not being whiny babies, they have legitimate concerns about their safety in this climate." So, I just felt a lot more like, wow I'm not--- it was a wake -up call. It made me feel like wow, it would be really great to work with just social workers. And it has been that. It is really nice to have colleagues that I know share my values around human rights and social justice. I think Worcester State has so much diversity, so they kind of feel like they are off the hook. But they don't do a good job of --- I had also been doing while this Trump thing was going on--- we did one of those campus climate assessments. So, we were interviewing students, faculty, staff--- really found that there--- it was very--- women were having a very different experience than men, and people of color were having a very different experience than their white counterparts. And I didn't think Worcester State was up to really looking at that or doing something about that. It felt a lot like, "Oh, that's going to be way too hard. "You know like, "ughh." And so that--- I felt a little disillusioned with what I thought it was and kind of seeing more clearly that it was a little more about training people to go into the middle-class work force, not question authority. One of my colleagues at Worcester State has his, his friend would say, "You're doing God's work at Worcester State, you are with those students that would otherwise be Hitler's minions." Right. Which is horribly and sad, but there is some truth to that. It is often a population that doesn't have their horizons all that far. They're pretty working class, this is the way we've done it, this is the way we're always doing it, we're going to keep doing what we're doing. So, it doesn't necessarily --- that was another thing--- not to bash Worcester State, because I do love it. But they also have a very, good enough. It's not a place that strives for excellence. It's not a let's do more, let's do better. They're like, "Eh, we're the state school, we don't have to be good, we're cheap! Why should we be good?" So, you know, I can buy into that to some extent, but it felt like another opportunity to something that was more up my alley, more connected to my identity was like, yay!

**HM:** So, what has the work meant to you? It seems like it's meant a lot, but does it actually mean to you like the work that you do.

**AE:** I--- it does mean ---to me that's what life is a lot about. I really feel like people like humanity is about being kind to other humans, helping like I do feel like we are on this earth to help our fellow man, and that I know I got a lot of help from people in my community. So, it feels to me like that's what you know, it isn't about--- I think just my values. Like I'm not really that all interested in accumulating wealth, or you probably will be shocked to hear that I do not put a lot of time and money into my appearance [laughs] Right? Like I'm not---that's just not--- I don't really care that much about shoes and clothes, and like I care about how are people doing, what's going on for people, like can we help them? If I can help, I'm going to help. So, I do have a sense of being helpful.

**HM:** What were/are your primary responsibilities in terms of housework and childcare?

**AE:** I would say that that is definitely a source of, of trauma in household. I do feel like I do carry--- I do feel like it's the default that I'm in charge of housework and childcare. Even though,

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and right... My husband had a heart attack about a year and a half ago, and hasn't been--- hasn't worked since then. And so, he has picked up more housework and childcare stuff, but I still feel like, like don't I since I'm making all the money don't I get a pass like I should still have to do this? But I do. And I guess that is the reality of... And you know, he's always reminding me of the things he does, like all the snow removal and car stuff and all that. But I do feel that's one place where sexism manifests all the time---that the and even the school if he is home, they still want to call me like they don't and things are so much better I think than they were like probably my parents' generation, your parents' generation. Now you go to school things and there are probably as many dads as moms, but that had never, you know, it was only moms doing stuff at the schools and like now my husband is doing the mountain biking club with our son and--- so it is cool but like it is nice to see men be a lot more involved in their kids' lives than they have in previous generations, so I think that's good but, I still think it's not equal.

**HM:** So, you would say that you do you are like kind of the default, but then he has like kind of picked up (yeah, yeah) stuff since he has been at home more?

**AE:** Yeah, he'll pick up stuff and you know he feels like he should, you know. He'll think I did all this laundry you should be throwing me a party of excitement, you know, like what I mean like--- and I'm like yeah I'm doing that still all the time you know like it just...

**KR:** Yeah like you did it once [laughs].

**AE:** Like he did it once like woo hoo! There was that time where you did all that laundry like, you know, and that's his work style anyways--- he's much more of a like all in and do a bunch, and then not come back to it for you know, another week [laughs]. But so, his efforts are much more ---and I think that's a gender thing too--- like you know like men get these big projects and they do those and then they're all done. Whereas women--- it's the constant of it--- it's like the they want dinner again? Like he does the majority of cooking though, so I totally got to give him that I don't cook at all [laughs]. Thank God he does that [laughs].

**HM:** How have you balanced different priorities, roles, and interests in your life?

**AE:** Its hard. I don't know that I'm always as balanced as I'd like to be, but I do try, I do, I also make jewelry make necklaces so that's...

**KR:** Did you make your necklace?

**AE:** I did.

**KR:** I like it.

**AE:** So, that's like a really--- and I love that like side note. But for women jewelry is a lot of our wealth and like what we pass down to our daughters and nieces is like our jewelry. Right? Like you guys probably got jewelry from older female relatives at some point, and so it's--- so like it just feels so female to do to do stuff with jewelry and also like its super cool that like the world we live in now I can get pieces from all over the world, so like that's fun to me to, that cultural connection. And so, you really see some of like the history of people when you look at jewelry. Like no matter where, what part of the world is from, like early stuff looks like rocks and sticks and like it really has that tribal feel no matter where you are in the world. And I love that tribe, like tribally kind of stuff. So, it is cool. I wish, so in terms of balancing, I definitely wish I had more time to do creative stuff then I end up getting like that does end up what gets cut the quickest when you're busy.

**HM:** Do you think that like, how's balancing like, you're working like full-time and then like at home, like doing housework and stuff. 'Cause, like definitely, I feel like in the women's movement, oh sorry, they always talked about the like if a couple went out to like go protest, they would come back and like the husband would like kick off his shoes.

**AE:** Yeah.

**HM:** And then the wife would be like, okay time to make dinner.

**AE:** Right.

**HM:** Kind of like a full-time job all the time.

**AE:** Exactly. Yeah. I think that was a big piece to it, too. I've read a lot of academic stuff about it too, like if we monitored what women do, things would look a lot different, like we do all this work that doesn't pay. Like it's just kind of constant. If you---and we know like how much people don't want to pay people--- use illegals all the time to do their housework and their childcare because they don't--- like if you actually had to pay a living wage for that stuff, you couldn't afford to do anything other. That I think is a continual issue for women is the cost of childcare. And most of the people I know have that like, "Wow one of our--- like if we are a two-income couple, a whole one person's whole income goes to like childcare." And that's like wow. So, you kind of feel like do. I want to--- I think just financially things have changed so much too for like my dad and my step-mother had those jobs that were for their whole and lives, and my step-mother has an advanced degree and my dad doesn't have an advanced degree, but they made a crap, they made enough money to be like, be able to buy a summer house and like have vacations, have nice cars, have we'll get inheritances. You know, like I feel like I have this master's degree and I work just as hard, but I am not even close to what they made for money and I think that's common. You know my husband's parents are the same. Like we're not their education level and investment. They made so much more than we do and, you know, my age group now and hopefully that'll change for you guys, but it's like it's not you know.

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**HM:** Yeah.

**AE:** I think that's a little bit of the make America great again type of stuff. Although I think it's a coded make America white again, but I also think that--- you know that there was a time in our history when you could just have one job in and only that only the man in the household had to work, and that supported the whole family, and you could like live on that.

**KR:** Yeah.

**AE:** I don't know anybody that even I know a lot of professors and doctors and lawyers, and none of them make it on one income, even with really high-level jobs.

**HM:** Definitely. How do you think or what do you think are pros and cons of the path, of the path, you've chosen?

**AE:** I feel like if had I got a master's degree in business, my financial life would probably be a lot better. If I had different--- if I prioritized accumulating money, you know, I probably would have been able to do it and you know would be... I think that some of the cons is that you are never going to have like the... I don't know any wealthy social workers [laughs] that got wealthy because they are doing social work, you know. But on the other side, like pretty much everything I do feels rewarding and worthwhile. I have a lot of flexibility, like I can, you know, --- I don't actually have to be at certain places at certain times all that often, so I really can direct my own activities, do things when I want to. I can work from home plenty, so I'm pretty happy. I don't think I would change it. Like if I could make changes in society, and how much we... that bums me out that we don't value a lot of the things that women value like teaching and social work and nursing and all those traditional female dominated fields that don't pay. Because we just don't value women.

**HM:** How do you feel about the choices you've made in your life? Do you have any regrets?

**AE:** No, not really. So, I definitely delayed having kids, which I think was probably a good thing in a lot of ways, but I do think it adds more drama to it. You know when you're 20, and you get pregnant it's--- you have a pretty easy time with it, not that you're ready emotionally, maturity wise in your 20's, but physically, yes you have a pretty easy time with it, you know. But the older you get, I think it's more challenging physically to parent as you're older. So that is one of the only things I can think of. But I definitely remember being younger and being very worried about like I got to hurry up and have kids, if I want to have kids, I better get on this. You know like that kind of feeling.

**HM:** Well especially with like education, like it kind of prolongs that process. That's why.

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**AE:** It does.

**HM:** Instead of being like 22, the average to have a child is like 27, I think.

**AE:** Which seems a lot healthier, but it's still, you know--- and then you're like in your 40's and then you got a teenager [laughs]. Yeah, it is a lot I definitely think that was a surprise to me how hard parenting is and how little support there is for parents., like not much at all. That was a really--- and a lot of my colleagues share that experience, like that's a dark time because you do feel so isolated. Like you're not like--- I wasn't even home a long time or took a maternity leave, but like you are just with the baby day in and day out. You know you don't feel important 'cause you don't have a job. People like it's your status.

**HM:** Like you don't talk to a real person?

**AE:** Yeah, definitely. People look at you like--- and you know it's amazing and I love being a mom, but I really felt sexism at a whole new level with how little support there is with parenting at all. Like its really really--- like you're pretty much on your own.

**KR:** Yeah.

**AE:** Unless you have great parents that will help you with stuff, but society is not set up to help moms at all.

**KR:** That's an interesting point. I've never thought of it like that.

**HM:** Yeah, they said there was like a childcare, like some kind of program, but it got denied or vetoed by like one of the presidents. I think it was Nixon. And that's where it like never got.

**AE:** Yeah.

**HM:** Like no one touched it.

**AE:** Right? It's really too bad that we don't because it's such... And early childhood, you know, is when like it's really important in what's happening to you when you're a little kid. Like we know now that those early experiences set you up for the rest of your life, so if you're like being raised by a mom that's at her wits and are already and feeling unsupported, like that's not good for our society. I think that's one of the biggest manifestations is sexism--- we don't care about kids at all. We don't.

**KR:** Yeah.

**AE:** We just don't. I don't understand why we don't. All of us were kids. Every single lawmaker was at one point a kid, but we just really don't seem to care a lot about kids. Some of this stuff, too, as a social worker and even teaching college, I'm really, really aware and tuned into how much child abuse there is and in particular child sexual abuse. Like the amount of--- pretty much every single semester I would talk about like the what happens when you've been sexually abused, like how that's going to play out in your life and there is always at least one or two students that disclose that that happened to them. And, you know, they've been feeling like they like they--- it's the first time--- there is still all this shame about it and there is this secrecy and darkness about it. So, it's like bad enough how it is, but when the culture is so much in denial about it and doesn't want to look at it and wants to pretend it's not there... Like that's just bad.

**KR:** Definitely.

**HM:** Yeah, we've been learning about that a lot.

**AE:** It has a lot more-- there's a book I did a class on trauma over the summer and I used the book *Trauma and Recovery* by Judith Hermon, and she really talks about the women's movement playing a huge role in women being able to come out about having been abused. And this piece I didn't know about like the--- like Freud was one of the first people to really figure out like all--- like he got a glimpse into the world of like, "Oh my God, like all these all these beautiful upper-class middle-aged women have been like raped by their fathers." Like he--- and he was like, "Oh my God if I tell people that this has happened and this is why they are having all these problems, I'm going to get thrown out of town, like those are my people the ones that are the abusers. I can't out them." And he like dropped all his clients that were and just like sent them into absolute psychological freefall. He was like helping them and building and then he was, "Oh this is really going to be bad for me, bye bye". And she talks a lot about the women's movement and coinciding with trauma and being, like you know, for when people have all this abuse stuff, they might be in dealing with it for a little while but then it just gets so heavy and they shut down, and go back on and back off and she really felt like the women's movement had that same sort of momentum. Like it catches momentum when things are just really bad that we all feel like we can't be quiet anymore. And then it's just so hard and apprehensive and exhausting that we are just like alright good enough. Right? And it's just so wavy like that because it's just a lot of heavy stuff to deal with.

**KR:** So, the next section we have is about politics. Do you consider yourself active politically?

**AE:** [Drinks water] Yes, I do.

**KR:** [laughs] I thought that was coming.

**AE:** Yeah I am a Commissioner for the Status of Women, which is not really a political position but it is the intent is to make positive policy recommendations around things that

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disproportionately affect women. And one of the things about social work that I love is social work attends to, you know, all the different macro--- when you're looking at the big societal stuff like racism and sexism and heterosexism, and then you know the clinical is how it plays out in people's lives. But so, one of the city--- there's two city councilor that are both social workers, Christian King and Sarai Rivera. And both of them talk about politics as being macrolevel social work. Like the idea--- their concept of politics is to use the political system to create a more equitable, you know, equitable system where everyone benefits and not just some people benefit. There is a lot of--- being on the Status of Women has raised my awareness about some of the ridiculous laws and just one of the things that really upset me was if you're a woman who's an addict and you're giving birth and you're in a treatment program, you give birth in shackles.

**KR:** Wow.

**AE:** I think they changed that, like this year, but that to me was like really? Like I don't know anybody who is going to try to run out of the hospital right after they had a baby. Like you really think they need to be cuffed? Shackled to the like wow. Wow. Right? And that like there what a horrible start for a baby.

**HM:** Yeah.

**AE:** Right? You're already being born into a mom that's an addict and now is being treated like a criminal through this whole thing like that she's shackled.

**KR:** Right.

**AE:** Right? And some of that I think-- side note politics-- but addiction-- the way we kind of handle addiction in our culture I think really sucks. I don't think we do a very good job. I think at some level we see it as an illness, it's not their fault, but procedurally, we don't really treat them like it's not their fault and we care and we just want them to get better. We pretty much treat them like we just want them to go away.

**KR:** So, have you been involved in any other volunteer or community work?

**AE:** When I was in Boston, I also did City Year, which is a--- it was it predated Americorps. Americorps was based on it. But it was about service. And definitely like ---I'd say that service is a core value for me. I do believe that the price of humanity is you got to get in there and help other people and give back. So, I have always tried to be involved and in, you know, doing service and I've worked on some political campaigns here and there. Haven't really wish I would have actually--- I have a friend who I'm hoping is going to run for state rep. [state representative]. But I don't have ---I would love to see more women in politics. That is one area where I think we're not anywhere near represented at the levels we need to be. Of course, it's disgusted me some of the stuff that's gone on. I know bad stuff happened under lots of administrations, but the

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Trump healthcare stuff where it's all men sitting at the table making decisions about women's health...

**KR:** Yeah.

**AE:** Like nothing offends me more, like that is infuriating, really like you don't even think women need to be part of this. Like wow. So you--- that to me is ---I don't even recognize politics like I as a younger would not have even ever predicted that I would ever be interested in politics or see politics as even relevant, but in my like but--- kind of the older I get and the more awareness I have, I realize wowee that's the arena we really need to hit to see any social change.

**KR:** And then also, what role has religion played on your life?

**AE:** I --it really hasn't played much honestly. I didn't grow up with any organized form of religion. My mother was raised Catholic and probably like many people that you know since you're here at a Catholic school--- had that, you know, rejection of everything Catholicism. So she, you know, had gone to Catholic schools and stuff. My grandparents were really Catholic, too, but my mother had the you know, "Ugh those people screwed me and those horrible evil nuns hitting people..." So, like I grew up with a very negative viewpoint on religion. My father was not really religious either, but from a Protestant background and even in their families there was you know, "Eww, you're going to marry a Catholic girl." Believe it or not, because I don't really see it playing out now, but there was this hierarchy of different religions and people thinking... I see a lot of people get strength from religion, but I see it as an institution that really oppresses the hell out of women. Right? While I was doing that trauma class, I watched--- I don't know if you know guys saw that Netflix documentary. What was it? The [snaps fingers twice] The Keepers. It was about the sexual abuse in the church basically. And you know is was there ---was this it starts with ---it's not like easy watching, but it's definitely interesting. It starts with the murder of a nun who was a teacher there and these students were like, " Oh my God we loved this teacher, we got to figure out what happened to her." And as they tried to kind of untangle, it seems like what happened was some of the girls came to her and told her what was happening to them, that they were being raped by the head of the school. And she said, " I got this, I'm going to take care of this girls, don't worry and ended up dead. So really it looked like I mean they kind of--- nobody paid, did any time, but basically it seemed like the murder ---the reason she was murdered was because she was going to drop a dime on these people that were abusing girls for decades and it's, you know, one of those things where it started where--- if anybody has information about Sister Mary Kathrine's death ---like and then they started getting like year after year women from all those years came out and said, " I was being sexually abused at that school."

**KR:** Wow.

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**AE:** And so that to me is more of my thoughts about religion. That a lot of times it's a place where secrets are kept and shady crap happens and it's not--- I think that I have the viewpoint that a lot of times people that lead religious movements are scamming people, like using that as a-- to me that's nothing more disgusting than to tell somebody like God says everyone like this about you. Really like whatever my concept of God is, I would not feel the nerve that like I could tell anybody else what God's intentions or beliefs right?

**KR:** Yeah.

**AE:** Like it's so arrogant to me and it is really so male I think [laughs]. Organized religion just feels so male to me. And the idea of it is so...

**HM:** Yeah women priests? You don't even think about it. [everyone laughs].

**AE:** Have you ever seen there are no women in religion? At least in formal organized religion. Like the highest thing you can be is a nun and they are not exactly exalted.

**KR:** Right.

**AE:** They are like okay we'll let you.

**HM:** Okay the next thing we are going to talk about is health. How have health issues impacted your life or those in your family?

**AE:** Well I think I mentioned before that my husband had a heart attack about a year and a half ago. And he's 38. And it has been this whole awareness for me. I'm definitely one of those people that would eat any sort of fried food, like junk food and all that stuff and not really think about a lot, about it kind of feeling like, "I don't want to have to look at that because if I start paying attention to how unhealthy my diet is like woah that's going to suck." But, yeah, I really see now more than I did, how the health system doesn't have any real interests in us being healthy. They really have the whole--- like pretty much every other system is about making money for themselves and not about ---and like now much more I read labels, pay attention to where stuff came from. Whereas I never did before. It's near impossible to eat healthy. The cost of it is ridiculous, the accessibility. If you're not planning for just your own stuff and making yourself meals all day, if you're going to try to eat with everyone else, you're not eating healthy. Like I'm sure your café right?

**KR:** Yeah.

**AE:** And I think that you know there is a lot of policy politics that happen in the whole health industry. Some of the stuff that health insurances will cover for male like they'll cover Viagra

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unlimited, but birth control you got to pay for it yourself. There's so much systemic sexism in the healthcare industry that it's pretty depressing. [everyone laughs].

**HM:** What are your experiences in accessing or accessing quality affordable healthcare?

**AE:** I fortunately--- every place I work has given me health benefits, but that's always like a big consideration. Times that I didn't have health benefits is really scary. You do feel like a disaster could strike at any moment. So, but and I haven't very felt like there is a lot of choice, like I don't ever feel like I'm really picking ---I'm like picking Plan A or Plan B and they are already pretty preset with, you know. So not but also the fact that we live in Massachusetts and even Worcester has incredible access to doctor. Like if we were living in a different place, my husband might not have survived that heart attack--- he was ---he had that heart attack and they put one of the stents ---like they have all this pretty impressive new technology that they can do with--- he has a stent. It's called ---and he's, you know, pretty much I mean he's still not completely in but in much better health than he was before the heart attack by a lot. And we really recognize how lucky it is that we have access to good healthcare pretty quick and easily. Even my in-laws had both big health things go on this year, too, and they went into Boston for stuff, and we already have pretty good stuff in Worcester. But if you need to you go to Boston, and that's like world renowned healthcare... So, it's really--- I feel like we are really fortunate to live where we live that we have, you know, so much for doctors and hospitals and...

**HM:** So, are you pretty much like in are you responsible for you, your husband, and your son's healthcare?

**AE:** Yeah.

**HM:** And then let's see.

**KR:** So those were our health questions. So, we have some interview conclusion questions.

**AE:** Okay!

**KR:** How do you get through tough times and what kinds of thoughts keep you going?

**AE:** Really feeling like I'm part of community and has been like has meant everything. Changing jobs kind of was really stressful and hard, and hard, and all this stuff was really challenging, but I feel like I have, you know, mostly women in my life that have my back and that has meant like that means everything. You really feel like you can take a risk or you can do something, when you know that there's--- like I do feel like if I didn't have a job tomorrow, I could hit up, you know, Linda at the YW or Maddie at the Department of Public Health or like people know me enough that they would help, you know. And that I think makes all the difference in the world. I can't imagine what it must be like for people to go through hard times and feel isolated, and not

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feel like they have ---and it is you know it's still hard, hard times are hard times, but the only thing that I think that does help is a support network of people that you feel like care about you.

**KR:** How do you define success in your life? And has this definition changes over time?

**AE:** I try to, you know, get into that whole zen mindfulness idea of, you know, being happy and grateful for the moment that I have. Having gone through my husband having a heart attack definitely gave me more of a sense of not taking things for granted, like I was just thinking like, "Oh my God I could be a widow right now and like, "Oh wow that would be so horrible for me and for my kid." And even though my husband annoys me sometimes and I feel like I'm doing more of the heavy lifting than he is-- like not like if he were dead, that would be horrible. And so you know that kind of makes like the things that before that happened, the things that I would normally be annoyed about with, I'm much less annoyed I'm like..

**KR:** I still like you.

**AE:** Ahhh he's alive! [KR laughs] Yay! Like and, you know, we do --he does and like I hate to be sexist like that, but he does take care of a lot of those boy things. Like if my car is broken down, he does that kind of stuff and snow removal and those kind of really manual labor type things that I would probably if I were a widow by myself, I would probably would be paying somebody to do it. "Cause I don't know if I could do all that. So I remember that when my--- I was pretty close with my grandparents--- and I remember when my grandfather died. I remember she said that she was like all these years I've been saying that he did nothing and now that he's gone, I realize that he did a lot. [everyone laughs] And so like yeah like she didn't even know how to get gas herself.

**KR:** Oh wow.

**AE:** We all had to help her like get gas because he always did it for her like she didn't even... You know, it was one of those kind of real traditional families where she took care of the kids and had dinner on the table, and he did everything else. And you know when you're the one taking care of the kids and doing everything in the house, you feel like you are getting no help, it's all on you. You know, and she had that experience, but also like that wow I guess there is something to this, uh I guess he's doing something after all. [Laughs].

**KR:** Based on your life experience, what advice would you give to women of today and future generations?

**AE:** Really cultivating relationships with other women I think is super important. I get--- often feel a little sad when a lot of college- aged women are I think a little too focused on finding a mate and settling down, you know, and so many---and you guys probably see this too--- lots of college girls would be like, "Oh my boyfriend broke up with me," like their romantic life was

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central is it gets a lot of priority, which I think it should to some extent. Like that's important for your life happiness, but it's not all there is. Like I do think women get the message that they need to be a wife and mom to have a complete and feminine life, and I think that's nonsense and I don't think that serves women to feel like they have to do it a certain way or be a certain way because I feel like often they focus on out instead of on their own stuff. That whole thing too I just feel like it's much more a society issue, but we tell women from the second they hit adolescence that the really the most important thing about them is how appealing they are to men, and that kind of disgusts me. I think that's really bad for us, and I see much more often girls and women buy into that idea.

**KR:** Yeah.

**AE:** Right? There they we can ---the data shows that too that they are pretty much doing fine and better than boys up until adolescence and I think it's all about now people see them as potential sex partners, and their whole vision of who girls and women are shifts. And they take that on themselves and feel like the most important thing is being attractive to men, like not that there's anything wrong with that, but there is a lot of other things in your life that could be just as important and, you know, I know women that don't have partners or have women as partners and you know they are okay with that. You know it's really not the end of the world [laughs].

**KR:** That's good advice. Now that we are working to tell a fuller story of the history of women than has been recorded in the past, what should we be sure to include?

**AE:** I just love that you're doing the project like to go back to like the first thing I said when you're shown leaders and you see men, men, men, men, men. That hasn't been my experience at all in real life, like all of my role models and mentors are women. And I look around and see women leading things all the time, and I love and ---so that to me that, that is validation of this social story is nonsense. Like really there aren't more any important women 'cause in my life right now mostly it's women that are really doing the important work and the meaningful things and making a difference. They're just not shown--- that we don't see that like we throw a party for men like every little thing that they are doing [everyone laughs].

**KR:** For doing the laundry.

**AE:** Yeah. Your husband cooks? You are so lucky, like really? You know like it just ---sexism is absolutely alive and well and it does not mimic my life experience of having my women be the ones who have shown. The ones who have been there for me, who have shown the way, who have led my, you know, led my career like that's who I go for--- I have, you know, male friends too, but I do feel like that women ---there are women that really take care of other women and it's, you know, it's amazing. It's awesome.

**KR:** So, on that note, is there anyone else you would suggest we talk to?

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**AE:** If you haven't already done Linda Cavioli. She's amazing.

**KR:** How do you spell her name?

**AE:** Its.

**KR:** Linda.

**AE:** Yup. C-A-V-A-I-O-L-I. She's the Executive Director of the YWCA.

**KR:** Okay.

**AE:** I think they already--- she involved in like all that stuff, but she is really great and I know you, Maddie Castille. People have already interviewed because she was in that first one.

**KR:** Oh, okay.

**AE:** But she's another like she's got a really interesting story. She's from Cuba. [Laughs].

**KR:** Interesting.

**AE:** Was sent over here as a little girl from her parents saving her from Fidel [Fidel Castro]. There was this whole wave of little young kids that were sent to the U.S. from Cuba. And she was one of them, and she's been in Worcester her whole life leading all kinds of things. Pretty cool.

**HM:** So, we have questions that we have to like ask for our class not just for the WWOHP.

**AE:** Okay.

**HM:** Do you think that being a woman, being a woman, has been the cause of any setbacks or disadvantages in your career?

**AE:** Oh, absolutely. The having a kid-- really like I didn't think until I had a kid of how much that takes you out of the workforce for a while. Like, you know, other people might be on like Linda Wiltz, she did a big study about it.

**HM:** Yeah.

**AE:** The average male politician who has children, has like four or five year- old kids. If a woman is a politician, her kids are like 17or older. And you know that seems like a benign

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statistic, but I think it really does speak to how much how much of your attention has to go into parenting. And it does. I don't regret it, but I definitely felt like well like I haven't been teaching or I haven't been doing stuff, and now I'm going to not--- like I had to start fresh, but it sets you back to take some time out and be with your kid. And your head's not in the game. You know, you do feel less concerned about career progress when you're doing the parenting thing. And I think you never get quite--- as I think it like having a kid does curtail your ambition quite a bit as women, and I do think that that's part of why we still, you know, are so oppressed because we bear the full, mostly the full responsibility, for children. Men don't step up at all. I mean I think there are some men that do, but it's rare. It's really women's work to take care of children, and we don't value children, so we don't give them much for it. There's countries where like they get years of paid maternity and like people, like the Scandinavian countries, they're way ahead of us, but you know we don't like really the extent to it--- which I didn't think of it until I was having a baby is telling too. You know, it's not something we talk about.

**KR:** Yeah.

**AE:** It's not something that we look at. It's not something you know individual women will tell you like, "Oh my God, that was awful, it was so depressing or it was so blah blah blah." And, but I don't think it's one of those things that women talk about in terms of career planning, like well, you're going to have to take a left turn for a while if you decide you want to have children.

**KR:** Yeah.

**HM:** If you could change one thing about how society views women, what would it be?

**AE:** I mean, I think that the society is sexist from minute one and always has been. I would love to see a more equitable culture I do think like everything is about men. I was thinking about the moral development stuff right like Kohlberg's moral development skill like that's all men sitting like men have made decisions about it just is so frustrating when you start paying attention to it. How everything is norm to men and not to women. Everything. Right. So, what we look at and what we are told is good, is based on maleness, not on femaleness. And I think that obviously men benefit from sexism, but I also think it costs us all of us what we don't have equality. If we really genuinely had equality, it would be, our whole culture would be, much improved. It wouldn't just be women that would be better, it would be much better for men too.

**HM:** How would you define feminism and do you consider yourself a feminist?

**AE:** I absolutely consider myself a feminist. And I'm-- I don't quite get why-- I mean I think that's a manifestation of sexism that it's like kind of considered like a dirty word, and women don't want to claim that. Like a lot of time people are like, "Well I'm not a feminist." Well like as if it's a horrible thing to be and you know my concept of feminism is the recognition that women have all the same capabilities and talents and we--- it's not about what we have going for

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us, it's just about whether it's valued or not. To me if we really--- and that's the other thing too, I don't buy into this idea of feminism as wanting to be like men. I don't really have any interest in the maleness stuff, like being like hyper competitive and stuff that we associate with maleness, really doesn't appeal to me honestly. I just feel like if we valued women's work and stuff women care about at the same level, that would be the magic. Right? And I do feel like I don't know I do feel like at times feminism has been misguided with, "I can compete with a man, I can be just like a man." Like I don't want to be that. I just want you to think that the stuff I want is as important and is valuable. I don't need to do men. And to me that's, you know, like that is still part of that framework of dominance, but certainly one of the challenges has of modern feminism has been intersectionality and navigating that. One of the, you know, the YW is their mission is eliminating racism and empowering women. So really everything they do is designed to address racism and sexism. And there's a lot of work to do [everyone laughs] A lot! We are never bored! We are never bored! There's actually if you're interested in your women's studies group we are having a forum on I think October 11<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup>.

**KR:** Okay.

**AE:** Feminism through a racial lens. Taking a hard look at feminism through a racial lens.

**HM:** Okay.

**KR:** Okay.

**AE:** Do you guys know Suzanne Lewandowski?

**KR:** Yeah! She's the head of women's studies here. Right?

**AE:** Yeah. That's my buddy and she knows all about.

**KR:** Awesome.

**AE:** She'll tell you about it too. She's also a commissioner for the Status of Women.

**HM:** They will probably send out an email then.

**KR:** Yeah [laughs].

**AE:** Yeah. She'll send out stuff about it.

**KR:** Perfect.

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**AE:** But yeah. It is nice to have that's pretty cool too when you have women that are involved in Women's Studies that are actually doing a lot of cool things. Like you know they're not just talking about it in the classroom. They're out there doing it.

**KR:** Really doing it.

**AE:** Really doing it.

**KR:** Yeah that's very cool.

**HM:** Cool. Thank you so much.

**AE:** You're so welcome.

**KR:** That was our last question.

**AE:** Alright, great!

**KR:** Thank you so much.

**AE:** Sure! How did we do for time? More than an hour or not too bad?

**KR:** No, not bad at all just twenty minutes, but.

**HM:** That's not bad at all.

**KR:** Like over. Like total. [Everyone laughs].

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