

Interviewee: Yaffa Fain  
Interviewer: Cody Smith  
Interviewer: William D'Avino  
Date of Interview: April 3, 2024  
Place: Worcester, Massachusetts  
Transcriber: Cody Smith



Overseen by Professor Cinzia Pica, Assumption University

**Abstract:** Yaffa Fain was born in Hamden Connecticut in 1995 and attended Hamden High School. Yaffa's mother was born in Pittsburgh., PA and her father was born in Hartford, CT. She is the youngest of three children, having two older brothers. Yaffa attended Clark University in Worcester, MA from 2013-2018 and has worked in Worcester since 2017. She is currently working for the City of Worcester's culture department as the deputy cultural officer. In this interview, Yaffa discusses the significance of her position in relation to her life and how she has come into the position. Yaffa also mentions the women who have shaped her life and where she is today and the identity she has found among her friends and family. Yaffa touches on her creativity and role that this characteristic and others have taken in how she relates to others, specifically the youth that she is working with in the community of Worcester. In this interview, Yaffa also expresses the feeling of inspiration she felt from her parents to help others as much as she could throughout her life and career.

**CS:** So today is Wednesday, April 3rd. 2024. And we're here interviewing Yaffa. All right. Yaffa, can you tell us a little about yourself?

**YF:** Sure. So, I work for the City of Worcester's culture department. I'm from New Haven, Connecticut area. I was born in Hamden, which is a small town in Connecticut, and I have lived and worked in Worcester for about ten years now.

**WD:** Awesome. Thank you. So. Okay. Have you ever married or been involved in a relationship like that before? No.

**CS:** Okay. What specifically drew you to Worcester? Was it for work, or was it just out of plain curiosity? Yeah.

**YF:** So, I went to Clark University for school, and I studied sociology and geography there. And then they have a fifth-year program to do your master's. So I stayed to work on my public administration master's. And I was drawn to Clark because I knew I wanted to go to school in New England, and I loved that it was sort of a smaller size school, which was something really important to me when I was looking. And then Worcester felt like it had a really cool variety of things going on.

**WD:** How was your experience at Clark and in the city of Worcester as a college student?

**YF:** It's kind of funny to think back. So I had my fifth year reunion a year or two ago, just after the pandemic. So my five year after college. And I remember thinking, as a student, Worcester felt kind of small. So it's funny to go to school thinking like, I want a really small community. And then by the time you're done with school, you feel very ready to meet new people and have new experiences and go beyond on campus. So I think when I started to work for the city, I really grew to appreciate how many different neighborhoods and communities extend beyond just the Clark campus. Yeah.

**CS:** Speaking of that, like you mentioned, communities, like, did you have any affiliation with like Assumption or any other schools being in the, being in the area?

**YF:** I know I'm thinking this. I've been to most of the schools in the Worcester consortium, but I have not been to Assumption really. So this is a first. So I'm very excited.

**WD:** Welcome. Yeah.

**YF:** Thank you. Yeah I know some people who went to Assumption. But I did not get to explore here. So WPI was very close by to Clark (Worcester State??). I did cross country for two years

when I was in Clark. So we would have meets with the other schools and feel that level of competition.

**CS:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. So that little inter-city rivalry. Yeah. Yeah. It is...

**YF:** That small. Yeah. That's actually our enemies. So that's cool. But I mean like Holy Cross they do a lot of work with now with the different college students. So very nice.

**CS:** More specifically to your work, can you tell us a little about more what you do?

**YF:** Yeah. So I work for the City of Worcester's Culture Department, and I'm the Deputy Cultural Officer. I've worked with Worcester for seven years, so I started with interning in the city, and then I worked in the Health and Human Services department for a year, and then the culture office had a vacancy. So I began working there again. So that's where I interned. And now I'm working there full time several years later. So it's a cool kind of experience to have kind of being an intern, being a program admin, moving up through that experience through the ranks.

**CS:** Yeah, yeah. What, what about your job do you love most?

**YF:** I love working with the community, so that's my passion. The culture office that I'm in, we're very creatively focused. So our programming and our events and our permitting, everything has a bit of an arts and culture lens to it. And I love that it's creative in that way. But then I also appreciate that creativity is very intersectional. So that means that we do work with public health and mental health and also parks and recreation. So it feels like I get a lot of touch points into different parts of what's happening across the city. And then that creativity keeps me inspired.

**WD:** You work a lot with the school system in Worcester and as well as, like the colleges as well? Yeah.

**YF:** So one of our goals as a culture office, is to engage with young people as well as folks from all different generations, but youth being a really important demographic. So we're often working with the colleges. We work with Worcester Public Schools quite a bit. We have a couple youth programs, so we have Create 508, which is a youth entrepreneurship program where we teach young people about creativity. And then also the youth poet laureate who's an ambassador to poetry is a program run out of our office. So we're always trying to think, how can we engage more young people? And during college and high school, and when I was younger as well, I was really passionate about always working with young people. So that's something that I'm really excited that I get to bring to this work.

**CS:** In the community. Like, how do you feel like you engage with young people like the best? Like, how do you get young people like us engaged?

**YF:** Well, I want to hear your feedback on that because it is an ongoing question. I think what like I hear from people doing youth work. Exactly as you need to meet young people where they are. So recognizing the various barriers that make it hard for them to show up in public space or be who they are in any creative work that they're doing or what they're excited about. So whether that's like going to a school so youth have a touch point in schools or making space online for conversation or just recognizing, how do we make these spaces more accessible? So are they on bus lines or is there Wi-Fi? A lot of those different variables are really important to youth engagement and then also having conversations with young people. So recognizing what's important to them because we're often putting things out into the community or ideas. But it's really important to see what is the request and the demand.

**CS:** Especially from young people. Would you say that's one of the biggest challenges?

**YF:** I would say yeah, because it is hard to hear people sometimes if they're not participating and engaging and like, we'll have a sense that there's something that we want to do for the community. But community work is driven by what people need and what they're requesting. So if you're not hearing that demand, then it's hard to know how to shift funding or programming or opportunities. So yeah, the engagement is the biggest challenge. And then there's like a lack of trust potentially if folks haven't built a relationship.

**WD:** What, kind of, kind of going off of that? What kind of pros and cons do you feel like you've experienced with this path that you've taken in this role?

**YF:** So I'll start with cons so that I can...

**CS:** Yeah, yeah.

**YF:** I would say the cons and this would be true of anyone in public sector work is there is a lot of negativity. So like either distrust of the government or frustration with the system and a lot of that I can relate to and empathize with and understand as like a citizen and as someone in this bureaucracy. But I think that's the biggest con is like, you are part of a system that has perpetuated inequality since its inception. So that has a lot of structural difficulty and frustration. And so it's hard to feel like somehow within that system and then also trying to change that system. And in terms of pros, I would say there are few opportunities where you can have such an impact on your community on a regular basis. And that's kind of special in terms of the public sector work. So most folks don't enter the public sector for money. There's kind of a passion that drives doing this kind of work. And I feel like that keeps me engaged even when things are really difficult or frustrating.

**CS:** So you mentioned like the word passion. Was there anything that inspired you growing up or even later in your life that made you want to do what you're doing right now?

**YF:** That's a great question. Both my parents were in kind of public sector work, so I think that drives me and like seeing their commitment to the communities that they served. So my mom was an occupational therapist, and she worked with folks who had a lot of different physical and mental disabilities and then also substance abuse issues. And that was like early 2000. So we were having very different conversations around mental health and substance abuse. And she had just a tremendous amount of empathy and compassion and drive to serve different people. And then my dad worked as a Social Security lawyer. So he was also advocating for people in really extreme need. So those, those two, I think, inspired me to do something in the public sector and working and interning in Worcester kind of directed that path for me.

**WD:** It sounds like your family has definitely been influential in the way you navigate the world right now. Can you tell us a little bit more about your family and what that kind of dynamic looks like for you?

**YF:** Sure. So I am very fortunate my parents are still around. I have a bit of an age gap with my siblings, so I have two older brothers. And then my parents had me when they were slightly older. So I've always had the experience of the older parent. Yeah. If you've ever had that experience of that relates for you guys, it's like a very unique experience that you just have parents who are like experiencing retirement and elderly, as I'm still a young person. So I feel like that's informed me to be a bit more of an old lady myself, but in theory. So I have two older brothers, and since we have an age gap, I have lots of nieces and nephews. And that was like a really fun experience for me growing up. Instead of having like so much of a sibling relationship, I had like an aunt relationship. Yeah. So I have 11 nieces and nephews. Wow. And both my brothers have 4 to 7 kids, so. Oh my God, a lot of littles. It's a large family. So what is important to me, like, historically my grandparents on my mother's side were in the Holocaust, so a lot of our family died in the Holocaust. So it's been really important to us is like, how do you rebuild? And some of that generational trauma, like, how do you evolve beyond it and carry some of that hurt? And yet still be really excited and relish in life and see how much meaning is out there, even out of like, really difficult and traumatic experiences.

**CS:** So, like, what are one of the key values you hold in your life given your experiences?

**YF:** I think something that I think about and this relates to the way that I do the work that I do, there's this Jewish practice called *tikkun olam*, which is like repairing a broken world. So recognizing that, like all of us have a role in making our world more whole and that there's like a lot of fragmentation and alienation and isolation and a lot of those negative experiences, especially out of the pandemic, that we're still grappling with. But that *tikkun olam* practices like how do you repair the world and be a part of this communal healing? So that's something that really resonates with me. And then I think my Jewish identity is something that I experience and has shaped some of my identity also.

**WD:** Can you elaborate a little bit more on what role religion has played in your life?

**YF:** Yeah. I don't think of myself as particularly religious, but I do think of like a lot of spiritual practices that have informed kind of what's important to me. So I think family is like a very big value in Jewish culture. And then faith to me, beyond, like understanding, like a deity or a god or like those kind of questions around faith. I think faith is also like a practice of like meaning and understanding and finding significance when there's a lot of challenges and an uncertainty. So I think as an adult, I recognized I had this expectation that like to be happy or content means that you're, like, consistently positive. But I think now that I'm getting a little older, I'm recognizing something about like positivity or meaning is recognizing when there's like challenges, you can still kind of level your ship. And I think faith has a sort of play in that as well.

**CS:** So you mentioned that of like faith and family, they seem very important to you. Is that something that was instilled in you growing up, or is that something you kind of figured out on your own?

**YF:** My parents were very connected to, like, our Jewish community. So I think growing up, I did have some of that connectivity. And it's interesting because I haven't connected as much to the Worcester Jewish community. Like I still have that connection back home. So it's weird for me to say, like, I'm not religious. Like, I don't go to synagogue here. Yeah. But I do feel like the traditions were instilled in me growing up, and they're still important to me. And then I feel like around the holiday season, it's very interesting to then remember, like, your identity in that way. Like, right now we're coming up on Passover, which is a Jewish holiday which often aligns with the same timing as Easter. So it's kind of funny to think about like those two.

**WD:** We touched a little bit on religion and spirituality. I'm also curious about like political involvement as well. Do you consider yourself actively political in your - and any - community or just generally.

**YF:** So like that's one of the interesting things to navigate working for the city is just making sure that I don't have like a political affiliation publicly. So not representing a candidate locally or kind of sharing my political beliefs, which is a weird way to exist in a space where you want to make change, but then you're not, like representing specific politicians. But I do consider myself very like, change oriented, if that makes sense. So I do think it's important to vote and to

show up and to campaign and to rally. And in my current role, I do a lot of the permitting that happens for the city behind the scenes for those things. So I work with organizers pretty regularly from different communities. And I'm excited that I can help them with the work that they're doing and to advocate for things that are so important to our community.

**CS:** How would you - you mentioned the word change and earlier you mentioned creativity. Like how would you incorporate both to inspire change and creativity?

**YF:** I like that question a lot because I think that is what is unique about creativity is you need that kind of ingenuity to make change. So I think a lot of folks often think of arts and culture as like an add on or a plus in the work that's happening for the city, but we see it as so integral to how we can do things better and how we can learn and change. And like issues of climate change and social isolation, a lot of those can be explored through a creative lens. And I think something that we see in the modern world is there's a lack of humanity and creativity and arts and culture are so integral to being a person and to being a human and having like a lived experience where we entertain ourselves and we connect and we socialize and we express ourselves through creativity often. So I think it's so important to change, and it's like a way that we can be confrontational of systems that are messed up.

**CS:** So. So you did mention change in, like, in isolation. How did Covid in your life or in the community's life, did you see, like, really impact yourself or the community personally?

**YF:** Covid was very scary. So as I mentioned, having very elderly parents who were kind of high risk. That was like a moment where I really had an experience of understanding how they're at risk. And that's just terrifying. Scary. Yeah. Yeah, like that was really hard to imagine. And then to feel like we're connected and responsible for one another's safety and health and like, very tangible, real ways that made it so obvious. Whereas I think before it'd be like, okay, someone isn't taking care of themselves. That's like a personal choice. But then you recognize that like, our community's health is so integrated. And from like a Worcester perspective. We saw cultural institutions really suffered. We saw lots of businesses closing their doors. We heard youth saying that they didn't feel like they got to connect with anyone, let alone other youth or their family. They felt very isolated. So Create 508 that youth program I mentioned, we built that based on



feedback from young people that they weren't able to connect, and they said that that was so important to them. So recognizing where the pandemic made us do things differently and grow. That's been sort of some of the positive that we've seen out of that hurt. But we still do see that there's such a rise in people's feeling of isolation and harm still rippling.

**WD:** What does socialization and connection look like for you? Because you've talked about it in like the youth in the area and the people that you work with. But how specifically do you connect and socialize?

**YF:** Yeah, that's a great question. Something that I have loved about Worcester is I've met so many amazing people. And people from all different experiences and locations and backgrounds. And I've made some friends who I feel like are family now, who I've met through Clark or who I met through the work that I do. So I feel like those connections have really helped me feel grounded here and connected here. And they're friends that I cannot imagine having met wherever else. So that definitely grounds me. And then at the moment, Copia [Technocopia] does like a free Stitch n Bitch is what it's called. So I'm also a very crafty person, so I've been going to that on a monthly basis, which has been really fun. The library does a free yoga class once a week, so I go to that. I'm always kind of keeping my eyes peeled for like, what's happening in the community and how can I meet other young people? And then I love being outdoors, so I really benefit from this area. And Central Mass is so close to everything. So I'll go up to New Hampshire or Vermont if I need to get out of town, or I can go home to Connecticut and see loved ones.

**CS:** So would you say the connections you made are what draws you back to Worcester?

**YF:** I think they're what keeps me here, I would certainly say so. I think it's hard now because I am in a point of transition where lots of my friends are starting to move elsewhere and like, feel that pull. So that's kind of hard to see people go. But then also, Worcester is still so close to those folks often that I can visit and still feel very connected.

**WD:** What was - just because I'm familiar with New Haven area - what was the transition like coming from New Haven, Connecticut to Worcester? Like? Similarities, differences?

**YF:** I do feel like a lot of similarities. So to me, Massachusetts and Connecticut have half the same name cities and a lot of the similar vibes in terms of like, New England seasonal, (al??) territorial, like there's a lot of similarities that I notice in terms of differences. Where I am from in Connecticut is like unusually diverse for Connecticut. So a lot of folks do tend to think like, oh, Connecticut has a very white, very privileged conception, but where I'm from in Hamden, New Haven area is not so much like that, and it's a little bit more similar to Worcester. And that was something that was really important to me when I was choosing a place to live next. In terms of differences. Worcester is still technically the second biggest city in New England, so it is bigger than where I'm from. So there's more people in this concentrated space growing up.

**CS:** Where did you go to high school?

**YF:** I went to Hamden High School. Okay, yeah. So that's like a large public school. So I think my graduating class was like 450 students, so it was almost 2000 people. So my high school was practically as big as my college. Which is like only marginally bigger by college standards. Which had I really made that connection as a young person, maybe I would have thought about it differently. At the time, it felt like a really good school. And then by like junior, senior year, that felt like a very small scale.

**CS:** You said you wanted to look for like a smaller college. Did that have anything to do with it going to such a big high school? You're like, I need a different feel, like I need a different vibe.

**YF:** I mean, honestly, high school felt similar in that by the time you're graduating, you really know a lot of the people. But I think I just had that, like quintessential New England college experience as like my vision for going to school. Yeah. And just imagining like a green where we all hang out and everyone knows each other. So like, some of that drew me and then I think also, it was hard to envision being in classes with 200 people like that. Just sounded like it sucked. Yeah. In terms of engagement with professors and learning and like, feeling like I'm getting a

value in the school that I'm at. So that was. And then Clark also has a really strong financial aid program. So I was able to get a really substantial scholarship that made it feasible and economically logical. I think like I may be a smidge older than y'all. So like, the folks who are going to college in my era were like post 2008, post 2012 crisis, when you're like, you're going to get out of college and have a ton of debt and no job opportunities. So like that was driving a lot of people in their college choices. And I mean, it's still a driving factor now, but I think we just came out of a different economic crisis and like two in a row that really freaked people out. Absolutely. Yeah. But basically, now let's see.

**WD:** What were your high school and college experiences like - like what were you involved in and just that kind of feel?

**YF:** High school, I did a ton of volunteering with young people about something that I was really passionate about. So I did like after school tutoring for elementary school students 2 or 3 days a week. For a couple of years. I was on the soccer team for freshman and sophomore year, so I did JV and varsity soccer and then honor society, all sorts of clubs. I was second in my class in high school, so I was very, like, academically minded. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So that was something that I was really passionate about in high school. And then in college we had a program called Youth Outreach Worcester. So I was involved in that for four years that I was in college. And we would go to the local Worcester Public Schools and do presentations on microaggressions and violence and dating. So that youth engagement was really important to me in college also. And then I enjoyed cross country until I did it. My body was like, you're old. So I did cross country for a couple of years. And then I also just appreciated, like, Clark has a reputation for kids having like 5 to 10 clubs that they're involved in and like crazy amounts of clubs. But I really did kind of like that. You could have that variety and be doing a lot of things.

**CS:** So switching gears a little bit like more about your personal life, do you have like a self-mantra or motto that you tell yourself that keeps yourself going? That something that you say, that's...

**YF:** A good question, a mantra? But I'm trying to think. I feel like someone who screenshots a lot of affirmations, so this is often affirmation of the day. What is my latest? One thing that I do

try to do is like, if something feels scary, do it. That kind of like challenging. What your limits are and your boundaries and taking those risks. I don't think I'm so risk oriented, but it's something that I'm trying to do more of. And then if something is scary, like, okay, maybe try that, even though it sucks initially, like really pushing myself beyond my comfort zone.

**WD:** So we've covered a lot of like your interests and how you work with the youth and the areas that you've been in kind of going along with personal life as well. Growing up, did you have a mentor or somebody that you looked up to outside of your family that is kind of taking on the role that you've taken on for other youth or young individuals?

**YF:** I'm thinking. So I was really lucky, even in the public school, like I've been in public school my whole life. Outside of college, I had really excellent teachers throughout those experiences. And I think I can't name like one teacher that I thought sucked, like everyone I thought was really good and was important. And affirmational in saying like, you can grow and you can try and you can learn. So I think I would be really grateful for all the teachers that I've had. And then I also feel like in Worcester, I had really excellent professors at Clark, who I felt like I could build some connections with and ask genuine questions like, how do you do this work? How do you stay motivated? How do you deal with like an onslaught of challenges? So those Clark professors were awesome. And then in Worcester, working with the city, I've had a couple of really awesome co-workers who have shown me the way that they're doing things or the way that they're balancing because it's a lot to be a young person and then working and also dealing with how do you support your own mental health, like all of those questions. So I think I've been really lucky over the years, like between teachers and mentors and co-workers. I wouldn't say like there's one person who's helped me feel like I formulated my identity, but so many people who have been supportive.

**CS:** So it kind of sounds like, well, it sounds like you seem like you're really ambitious. Is that something that just came naturally to you, or is that something that you've done in practice?

**YF:** I don't want to go astrology because that's a little unscientific, but I am a Capricorn, so.

**CS:** There you go. Yeah, there are notoriously.

**YF:** Like, hard working. I would say that's the only thing that I really do. Capricorns also have a very bad energy. But yeah, ambition has been something that drives me and I think. What maybe sustains that is like the ambition to me feels like driven around making change. That's important. And so like, I'm not driven kind of by finances or status. Like it's really hard to like let go of those capitalist conceptions of like what success. But I think really being driven by like, how am I making change in my community or how am I making things better? Or how am I growing myself like that has driven me? And it doesn't feel as superficial. It feels a little bit more meaningful. But I think it might be because I have two older brothers that I'm competitive. That could be an ambitious thing. And like having older brothers who are like ten years older, you're always like, fighting to keep up. But I do definitely think that has kind of been a theme in my identity. So definitely a little ambitious.

**WD:** Speaking of your brothers what is the age gap between you and your brothers and what did that relationship look like for you growing up?

**YF:** We have an age gap of nine years and 11 years. So when I was in elementary school, that was kind of like the last period that we were living together before they went off to college. So having people in your lives who are ten years older, they're like both protective and competitive and challenging and then very caring. So in a way, like having another set of parents who have like a different relationship with you. But I do think seeing what my brothers did, like, it gave me a lot of excitement around, like, what is going to college look like? And what does it look like to do sports, or what does it look like to play an instrument? Like there was always a goal to be like, how do I be like my brothers? And then slowly, now that I'm in my 20s and we've lived in separate states for years, I think I like, feel a little bit more of my own independence in my identity.

**CS:** Did you enjoy being the youngest in the family?

**YF:** Yes. You cannot be the youngest girl of three. And I think I have like a unique connection to my parents because of that. So like, my brothers moved out. So in a way, I was almost like an

only child from, like, middle school through high school. And today so, yes, it definitely got the baby of the family treatment. Like the daughter treatment. I will admit I am the favorite. Like you can put that on the record. So working actively on that. Yeah.

**WD:** I had a question about family and it completely left my mind. So beyond. So, like we've talked about your brothers and a little bit about your parents. What can you tell me about, like, your grandparents or aunts and uncles relationships with your extended family? What do those look like?

**YF:** I mentioned my grandma before, so she was like an anchor of our family. So my mom's mother. She just passed away two years ago. But before that, our family was, like, very grounded around her because she was kind of like a matriarch. And she's someone I strive to be very much like. However, I can do that because she was extremely strong willed and determined and independent. And then, like that value of our family, that was sort of, I think one of her strongest values and something that we're all trying to live up to as a family. But she was sort of important to us all. And then also, I'm pretty lucky I have aunts and uncles who are all elderly. At this point it feels like. But they're kind of all unique and very kooky. And also some are creative and a little wacky, and I kind of like that. I think when I was younger, I was kind of embarrassed, like, who are these crazy people? And it feels like they're kind of not like everyone else or they're not conventional enough or they're doing weird things. And now as an adult, I really value that. They were unique and all. I think they all have very good intentions, even if they're bizarre. And I love that I've been exposed to people who are doing all sorts of different things. And a lot of them live in New England. So we do get to connect. And then others are kind of beyond this area.

**CS:** Is there like an important life lesson your grandmother taught you?

**YF:** I would say resilience. Yeah. Like understanding that as a Holocaust survivor, she came to America and had lost most of her family. And like her immediate peers and family and friends and loved ones. So recognizing that, like, even though I could sense that there was a level of trauma that she experienced and lived with until she passed, you could still see that she had so much passion for life. And then we would joke, like she would go swimming at the local

JCC, and she would then swim for an hour and be like, oh no, I need to swim five more minutes. So I make sure I hit an hour. Like she had such a zest for life. And appreciating that from someone who went through a life you can't imagine living.

**WD:** Yeah absolutely. Sorry. I'm like, I get caught up in listening and then I, like, don't have a question like forming in my head. Okay. So like, the Holocaust is a really tough time for your family. Speaking of yourself, how do you get through your tough times and what kind of keeps you going?

**YF:** I think what keeps me going is like striving to have a balance. Like I mentioned, going outside is really important to me, so I probably try to go outside every day if I can. I end up probably in the woods almost every weekend because to me, that's like how I feel kind of reinvigorated. Crafting and being creative keeps me balanced. And I think, like, really recognizing little daily moments of gratitude are so important to feeling more grounded. And also having a little bit more grace for myself as I've grown older, I kind of have some of that. Whereas before I would have felt like, oh, how did I make this mistake? Or how could I do this wrong? Or why is everything feeling like so extreme? And I think having a little bit more like trust and appreciation for myself and understanding that I can make mistakes and that's okay. And like to that risk taking goal that I have at the moment, like making mistakes is so important to moving forward.

**CS:** Is there a place in nature that you feel the most grounded, as you say?

**YF:** I love the beach. I love being by the ocean. I feel like kind of reflecting on the cycles of nature. You feel that? And by the sea. And then I love also being in the woods. So pretty much anywhere, anywhere. I will be outside if I can. Yeah.

**WD:** Do you plan on making Worcester - the Worcester area - a more permanent place of. That's a scary question. Living here forever or do you have - what are you like - what are your future plans looking like for yourself that you hope to achieve?

**YF:** Yeah. I think pre-pandemic, I could really see a vision and, like, think several years ahead and have that sense of objectivity. But now I definitely feel like, oh, it's a day-by-day situation here. And that is kind of important to me to have the flexibility. Yeah. So I don't really have a

plan at the moment. I would definitely say, like I foresee myself doing this work in Worcester. And I'm enjoying what I do now. I also feel like the draw of wherever the world takes me, being a young person, kind of. That wanderlust is sort of at my, my mind. But at the moment I do foresee myself here.

**CS:** So you've talked a lot about like your identity and values. So like, based on your life experience, what advice would you give to the woman of today in a future generations?

**YF:** Do you mind repeating that? Yeah.

**CS:** So, based on your life experience, what advice would you give to women of today or of future generations?

**YF:** I guess I would say at the moment—and this advice would probably change every day—I would encourage women to forge their own path. I think it's really hard with social media and social pressure and expectation from family or loved ones or expectations we have of ourselves to kind of find a unique identity and a unique path that aligns with our purpose and our hopes for ourselves. So I would really encourage women to forge a path that's unique, and maybe that doesn't look like what everyone expects for you or what you expect for yourself, but making space to be who you are authentically. And something that I've been inspired by is recognizing, like being your unique self and your identity in a space is such a like form of empowerment and even resilience. And it's also a huge privilege to be able to show up as who you are authentically. And I think it's really important goal if it's something that's attainable or aspirational.

**WD:** Awesome. Trying to think if I have anything else that I want to ask, because they keep coming and going. Would you say that advice and any advice that you give to women of today in the future is reflective? Of you and your family's history of women are like and like. I know you said your grandmother like, do you? When you are asked that question, do you try and channel anyone specifically or just straight from you?

**YF:** I can't say that I think anything is unique about what I said. So I would say, I'm sure I'm channeling lots of people who have inspired me. I think, yeah, I would say like my mom and my grandma, they have done things beyond the scope of women of their time. So like, certainly they attempted to live up to those values, too. My grandma is very traditional, so it's hard to picture



her also then being like a rebel against man and do your thing. So like she definitely, before she passed had like all sorts of things. She wanted me to do that I was like, okay, grandma, of course. And I think even my mom, like she had expectations of me, but now I see that she's opened her mind to like, what could life look like beyond the scope of doing work a certain way or living in a certain place? And then I think I noticed that I hold these expectations of myself. So letting go of some of those expectations

**CS:** And I think one final question I have is what's something in your life that you're proud of?

**YF:** I am very proud of my family at the moment. Like, I really love the people who are in my life, and I'm really proud of who they encourage me to be and then also who they are as they are really people who inspire me. Yeah.

**CS:** I'm on. All right, well, I think that's all the time we have today. Thank you for meeting with us today and much appreciate it.

**YF:** Thank you, thank you, thank you guys.