

Interviewee: Kate McEvoy-Zdonczyk  
Interviewers: Steve Kinsey and Katie Samalis  
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Worcester Women's Oral History Project

Transcribers: Katie Samalis and Steve Kinsey  
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**Abstract:** Having spent the totality of her life in Worcester, it is no doubt that this city holds a special place in Kate McEvoy-Zdonczyk's heart. She was born in 1973 and lived in Main South, attending various public schools in the city of Worcester, until she went on to college, first at Assumption College, then Worcester State University, to receive a bachelor's degree. Kate got her start in Worcester at Shaw's Supermarket on Gold Star Boulevard. This fueled her love for the improvement of the city, leading to working for Worcester Magazine and now in her current position as Vice President of the Central and Western Massachusetts division of Harvard Pilgrim Health Care. Kate has worked tremendously hard to make Worcester the best city it can be, and as Kate says herself, "Your community takes better care of itself when it's less anonymous." She plans to stay in Worcester for the remainder of her professional career and personal life. Kate embodies what it means to be a true member of a community with her dedication and passion to the prosperity of Worcester.

**Quotation:** **Know that you can do whatever you want to do, and don't let anyone else define that for you. And when you're scared, it's actually good...So, you do it, and it's the only way to make it go away, because you have the experience, and you're not afraid of that thing anymore.**

**KS :** Okay, we are compiling city-wide oral histories of the lives of Worcester women aiming to collect stories about a broad range of experiences. Based on the goals of the--- nope excuse me--- 1850 National Woman's Rights Convention in Worcester, we are focusing on the areas of women's education, health, work, and politics/ community involvement. We want to focus today on your experience with work in Worcester. Thank you for your help with this important project. So, do we have your permission, Kate McEvoy—

**MZ:** McEvoy.

**KS:** McEvoy, I'm so so sorry. McEvoy-Zdonczyk

**KMZ:** Yes, you do.

**KS:** On November 6, 2017.

**KMZ:** Absolutely.

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**KS:** Wonderful. Okay, so this is going to be a little bit repetitive, but what is your full name, including both your maiden name and married name?

**KMZ:** Sure. It's Katherine McEvoy- Zdonczyk, hyphenated last name, but I go by Kate.

**SK:** So, when were you born?

**KMZ:** I was born in May, 1973.

**KS:** Where?

**KMZ:** Here in Worcester.

**KS:** Where did you grow up in Worcester?

**KMZ:** So, I grew up in Worcester in two neighborhoods, very distinct areas, it's sort of interesting. I grew up in Main South, until about junior year of high school, which is as you know, one of the more disadvantaged areas in the city. But my parents were both well- educated, so I actually went out of district for school. And I went to school on the west side of the city, so Flagg Street and May Street school. And then in junior high school, moved over to the west side of the city. So, it was interesting. I had some relationships with kids my own age from the neighborhood, but didn't really know, and probably had greater resources than from an education standpoint by going to the other schools earlier on.

**KS:** It says on your sheet here that you're married.

**KMZ:** I'm married!

**KS:** So, what is the name of your husband?

**KMZ:** His name is Gary Zdonczyk, and he was born in Worcester, raised in Auburn, and we live about a hundred feet over the Worcester line in Auburn right now, which is as far away out of Worcester that I will move.

**KS:** [laughs] How long have you guys been married?

**KMZ:** We've been married for 14 years, but we have been together for 24. I met him the year after I left, I was here at Assumption [College], the year after I left Assumption, so I transferred to Worcester State, and met him there.

**KS:** That's awesome

**SK:** Wow. That's beautiful.

**KMZ:** And if I hadn't run out of beer money at Leitrim's [Leitrim's Pub], we might have never met.

**KS:** That's cute. So, you guys met at Leitrim's?

**KMZ:** We had classes together, but I didn't really know him, at all in classes. I think we maybe talked once or twice. So, I was out with my girlfriends with our fake IDs for the first time, and we ran into him at Leitrim's. And we were like, "Hey, and he's okay, he's kind of cute, whatever." Then we ran out of money by the end of the night, so we were like, "Hey buddy, buy us drinks!" And that was the beginning of the end.

**SK:** That's beautiful.

**KMZ:** So never leave without enough beer money.

**SK and KS:** [laughs]

**SK:** So, do you have children?

**KMZ:** I don't have my own children. I raised my sister's two kids, so they were six months and a year and a half when we took custody of them, and they are 26 and 27 now.

**KS:** What are their names?

**KMZ:** Their names are Damian and Aaron.

**KS:** So, if you don't mind us asking—

**KMZ:** Sure.

**KS:** If it's too personal you can butt us out, but how did you end up with your nephews? You said you were in college...

**KMZ:** Sure. So, it was---My sister had run away a lot in high school, sort of walks to the beat of her own drummer, is probably the nicest way to say it. She's here in Worcester as well. And she had both kids when I was still in high school. And we knew that the care for them was not going particularly well, and there was already state involvement that my mom had sort of initiated because we wanted to make sure that they were well cared for. And we reached a critical point in the summer of '91. I had just graduated high school, where it was becoming apparent that they were going to be taken by the state, or the state was going to intervene in some kind of way. So, my mom wanted to make sure that they stayed with us. My mom traveled a lot for work, so she would be gone for six weeks, or 12 weeks, or 10 weeks at a time in a foreign country. She

worked for Digital [Digital Equipment Corporation] at that point. So, I had already been accepted into Emerson [Emerson College] and BU [Boston University], and I had no plans to stay in Worcester at this point, and had to over the summer, get accepted to Assumption, took a couple of summer classes to prove that I could obviously do the work, etc. And then commuted here, while raising them, and they were babies, and she was gone for again six or eight weeks at a time. So, yeah that's how it all happened. And I was 18.

**SK:** Wow.

**KS:** So, is your sister older than you?

**KMZ:** Yeah, she's a year older than me. So, she has contact with them now. They actually have a relationship, but I think we've swept---she's swept some of that past under the rug, I would say.

**KS:** Good to hear.

**KMZ:** Yeah.

**SK:** That's a lot of dedication and hard work, too.

**KS:** So, you were talking about your mom, and how she was a business women, worked for a company called Digital. Do you want to tell us a little more about your parents?

**KMZ:** Oh sure, so they actually met at Worcester State [University] when they were in college. Dropped out because my sister came along, and got married, but it was very common back at that age group and what not. And they got divorced, gosh I want to say when I was maybe 10 years old. I was pretty young, if I do remember all of it. So, they had, you know, shared custody and what not, and my mom went back to school and got her degree, you know, she was very good at what she did. She got an education degree, but parlayed it into corporate, not training, but developing the curriculum that people are trained on. So, you have your owners of a company say, "This is what we need," and then she would develop the road map through training to get there, and, then work with the folks to deliver it, etc. So, she would do that at a very high level for computer software. So, typically it would be--- we've developed this new networking protocol that drives this thing called the internet, and the sales people for the organization, for Digital, would have to sell it. But they didn't understand it, so she would have to have the technical knowledge to work with the program designers and engineers, and then translate that into learning for the sales folks. So, they could be able to go out ---so she would be the filter between engineering and training, and then it would be handed off to be implemented for folks.

**KS:** Wow, that's really, really cool.

**KMZ:** Yeah, it's actually pretty interesting. It's another way to think of education, I'll tell you that. A lot of folks just think of kindergarten teacher, but there's a whole--- it's a whole world.

**SK:** So, you talked about your parents and all that, but is there any ethnicity or cultural groups that you identify with?

**KMZ:** Sure. I'm Irish, very Irish. Probably the most dominant gene in my gene pool, but I'm also Spanish or Dominican. My great-grandmother came from the Dominican Republic, moved to New York. My grandmother was born in New York, and you know, she spoke half English and half Spanish, so we grew up with the culture of Spanish foods. But it's interesting because they don't have special names when you grow up with it. Paella, we used to call it Spanish rice, and it would be just what she would make with whatever we had in the freezer, like pork chops or whatever. And I remember someone telling me onetime, a couple of year ago, that this was the most authentic paella I've ever had. And I just remember thinking that this just tastes like my grandmother's, like it's delicious, but it just tastes like what I grew up on. So, I identify with that ethnic group fairly strongly, and then the Irish side a lot. There is a huge Irish population in Worcester, so there's definitely a lot of cultural elements of that, and a lot of my friends in school were Irish too. In homeroom, everyone's last name began with Mc, so that's kind of how it went.

**KS:** So, you talked about growing up in Main South, but then you talked about going to school in, you said the west area of Worcester—

**KMZ:** Yup, the west area, so this side of Worcester.

**KS:** What was your neighborhood like growing up? Because you said, that it is known as not the best area of Worcester.

**KMZ:** Yup, so it's really interesting, and I think about it a lot now, too. Where I live in Auburn now, I drive through Main South to get to downtown Worcester, so it's about as fast as taking the highway, which is not that fast at all, but it keeps you in touch. I still go to church in Main South at St. Peter's Parish. You know, it was a lot of three-deckers. In the generation before it was a lot of three-deckers that were definitely all owner-occupied. And it didn't matter necessarily how advanced you'd get in your career or financially, you know that is where home was. So, they were very neighborhood driven, etc., etc. And there started to be more of a matriculation out to, well I should say, more of a migration, to the suburbs. And it was funny because you would see a lot of the folks from Main South area, depending upon which part of the city you were in, they would grow up in, they would gravitate to. If you were Italian, you would grow up on Vernon Hill. You would probably go to Shrewsbury or Grafton. If you were in Main South, you would typically go to Auburn or Worcester, west side of Worcester. And you would follow that pattern or whatnot, so you would see clumps of different neighborhoods and whatnot. It was probably, it was an urban area. Worcester is a great mix of suburban and urban. Few cities have the kind of suburban neighborhoods that we have around here, around Assumption College, and it does

create a sense of unfamiliarity with the urban side. So, in Chicago, you're probably not going to find suburban neighborhoods like this area in the city. You're going to have to go way out to the edge of the city or more, so in the suburbs to find a neighborhood like this, and it's probably the same for Boston because it's more urban mass. So, you're talking you know, even if they rent, or they have wealth, everyone has sort of a street savvy and they understand the urban environment. Where you are more watchful, you know, in an area like that with a lot of other folks, with a lot of other situations, and you just build this street savviness, right? And it's not good or bad, it's just how it is. So, it was very interesting with Main South because you grew up being more cautious and more self-aware and aware of your surroundings. We live right near Clark University, so you would always be, you know, on the alert for, you know, bad behaviors are there, dangerous folks out there, and whatnot. And it is a more underserved area in the city, so you know, there was crime, etc., but that's kind of just how it is. It wasn't a bad thing. And you know, I'll meet these people who haven't been there who have these perceptions that are kind of like, it's so dangerous. And I'm just like, "Well no, it's actually not." You know, I've been for my jobs all over the state, literally from one end to the other, and that comfort level or understanding I would say of an underserved neighborhood for the most part, or more of an urban neighborhood, gives you a higher level comfort. You know, I might be in a situation where I'm driving through Holyoke [Massachusetts], and they'll be like [gasps] gasping, and I'll just be like, "Yeah it is what it is. You just have to be thoughtful and careful and you'll be fine." I would say that I've only been two places in my life where I've only been like, "Okay this might be a little out of the norm for me." But you develop a different understanding, it's that unknown that breeds the fear, that breeds the contempt. So, I actually think that it was a gift to have that sightline into it and understand it on a more personal level. The neighborhood has changed a lot in that you're not seeing as much owner-occupied units, so people are less likely to stay in the units as a family. And as that happens you start to see folks who aren't as invested in keeping it up as a neighborhood place, and you do start to see whole neighborhoods turn into a more urban than suburban area, and you have safety issues and whatnot. So, I think that's happening everywhere, and Worcester has not been immune to that. And it's a shame in some regards, but I also think that we might jump to conclusions about the safety of certain neighborhoods without knowing or understanding them in the context of, you know, this is a city. This is what living in a city means. You know, you wouldn't walk down the street in New York City without having a level of caution.

**SK:** Yeah, and people don't go through New York City like, "Oh my God it's so scary."

**KMZ:** Yeah, and I think per capita when you look at other cities our size, or cities of similar sizes throughout New England and throughout the country, we're actually one of the safest, best-run. But people lose perspective because they're thinking about Main Street Holden [Massachusetts] and comparing it to Main Street Worcester. It's never going to be the same thing because, you know, by root of what they are, they are totally different.

**SK:** Do you have any other family members that live in the area?

**KMZ:** Oh God, yes. So, it's actually very interesting, I think it's one of the things that I love most about Worcester. Worcester has 200,000 people, I think population now is about 183,000. And when you start to look at it as more of a hub, and you look at the towns, I would say if you look at Worcester and one or two touch-towns out, kind of everyone knows everyone. There's about one degree of separation. Within the city, there are five public high schools. You got your quadrant high schools, North, South, Doherty, Burncoat, and you would know a couple of kids growing up in those schools, or in some of the other elementary schools. But for some reason, by the time you're out of high school, you know most of them. So, you can't go anywhere without people knowing where you are or what you do. And as common as I thought that was, as I get into other areas of the state, it's not. It's this very big, small community, and it's a good thing. And it can be a pain in the butt, but I would never call it a bad thing. But I will say, on the whole, your community takes better care of itself when it's less anonymous, and you are going to behave better if you know someone that's watching, right? So, you know, it's small enough where, you know, within the business community, you know, your word's going to get around. So, my dad was one of five, and all of his sisters live in Worcester. My husband is one of six, and all of his family members live in Auburn or Worcester County, and you know, friends are big and I have a million cousins. And we all live near each other, and you know, see each other all the time. But we know their friends, and their friends' friends, and what not. So, if you go on Facebook, you'll see that it's not uncommon to see someone and have 500 friends in common. Because half of them are relatives, or whatnot. When we moved into our house in Auburn, and again I didn't really know Auburn that well, my aunt came by to give us a housewarming gift. And so she said, "Oh my gosh, you guys live next door to your cousins." And I was like, "What?" And she said, "Your cousins, the Faheys." And I said, "I don't think I've ever met them." And she said, "Well they're your second cousins." I have no perception of who my second cousins are. There are probably hundreds of them. I don't know. And I said, "Good thing I didn't marry Irish because I'd be halfway down the aisle, and you'd all say this is a relative. You can't marry this person."

**SK and KS:** [laughs]

**KMZ:** Everyone in Worcester is either someone I'm related to, dated, or grown up with.

**SK:** Big family?

**KMZ:** My God, yes. Everyone knows everyone, which I think is a beautiful thing.

**SK:** I think so, too.

**KMZ:** Yeah. That's nice.

**KS:** So, what do you think women's experiences in Worcester have been generally?

**KMZ:** You know what, I think in many ways Worcester is ahead of its time. And I think part of that, there's a million reasons for that, and I think, some of the biases you grow up innately with, is because--- again stuff is unfamiliar with you, whether it be the neighborhood, the color of skin, and or race or ethnicity. I think in Worcester you are just kind of exposed to it. I never in my life, ever questioned, that I couldn't do whatever I wanted to do, or be whoever I wanted to be. And I was always shocked if there was another girl who maybe questioned it. More girls from towns maybe thought that, but Worcester was very empowering. I became active politically when I was 15 years old. So, the world is your oyster here, and in this particular town I think that we are lucky to have the opportunities that we have here. Also, the culture of small town which is great... So, I think for women it's outstanding, but I would caveat that by saying that people are going to set their own limitations based on their own experiences. So, someone else may have a completely different perspective of Worcester, based on what their experience and what their environment has been. For me the environment and experience were broader. I saw no barriers or walls.

**KS:** That's great.

**KMZ:** Which was great.

**KS:** I think I'm going to jump around.

**KMZ:** Yeah, I'm probably all over the map.

**KS:** No, it's fine. This is awesome. So, you said that you started coming political active when you were 15. Do you want to tell us a little bit about that? What organizations were you involved with? What did you do?

**KMZ:** Sure, well it's interesting, too. I grew up going to Flagg Street School. I went there, kindergarten through first grade, met a bunch of friends, very smart, high IQ [intelligence quotient]. We just sort of galvanized. And it was around academic stuff, but more of an interest in the world around us. I remember being in kindergarten, and one of my friends wrote a letter to the President at that point and asked him what he ate for breakfast. So, you know, I think about that. The teachers were pretty impressed, but we were like wow. It, sort of, pushes your borders out. My parents had always been active volunteering, politically, so I kind of grew up around it. In high school, in junior high school, a couple of my friends' parents were actually legislators, so we'd get thrown into the whole holding signs, and that kind of thing. A couple of them were city councillors, and one friend's father was mayor, so you know, we'd go volunteer and go to phone banks. And on the other hand, there was this other organic work that would happen from a volunteering standpoint, and not just politically--- huge Democrat, by the way, which again, I think it's an urban thing. You grow up in a city, and you're just a Democrat. So, we look to see where our urban centers are, and where Democratic strongholds are, and they tend to be in your more blue collar, manufacturing cities. So, Worcester fits the bill perfectly there. So other volunteering I remember in high school and junior high--- I had a friend, the same friend that

wrote the note to the President in kindergarten, and he'd be like, "Hey, you know what? Let's go down and volunteer at the Mustard Seed [Mustard Seed Catholic Worker] on Friday." And we'd be like, "Alright, let's go." And we'd go and have fun and try to push our boundaries. And now I can't say that that was happening at other high schools, but we saw how close the opportunities were. I was president of a bunch of organizations in high school, and I remember fundraising was the charges for one of them, which was Students Against Drunk Driving, which now I think is against Destructive Decisions or something.

**SK:** Yeah, SADD. I was president of that, too.

**KMZ:** Well there you go. Nice. So, I knew from some other folks, because I was working at a supermarket, I knew from some folks, that at the DCU Center, that was called the Centrum, would have these fundraising options. So, it really isn't hard to figure something out. So, I picked up the phone and called the DCU Center and said, "Hey, I heard you guys have fundraising stuff, is it appropriate for teenagers?" "Yeah, absolutely blah blah blah blah." So, we're like, "Great we'd like to do that." So, we go in there and you run a booth, and there are still people who do this to this day, and you get to keep 10 percent of whatever you sell. So, they get free labor for the night, and you get 10 percent of the \$2,000 in stinky hot dogs, or whatever you sell. So, we started doing that and then we built up our cause, and also got a higher level of engagement from the student body, and created more of a purpose driven organization, rather than a name only. At first, we felt like okay we need to get behind this and raise this money. And there we were like, "Well we have this money, so we have to do something with it now. You know, what are we doing this for?" So those activities and that involvement led to greater involvement because you learn the pathway to doing it, and you know where to start. I think that's such a big piece of it, you know. You have people all over the place who say I want to get involved politically or something, or I want do this. Well pick up the phone and call someone and say, "Look this is what I want to do, and it's literally that simple. But fear stops us from a lot of stuff, you know. So Democratic campaigns, I think I started getting more active on my own. Tim Murray who is our lieutenant governor, his brother Kevin, see I told you that everyone knows each other, we were in school together. I actually thought he was kind of a twit, but now we are friends..."

**KS and SK:** [laughs]

**KMZ:** I shouldn't have said that. No, he's a good guy, but when I was in college here at Assumption, I was --- and at Worcester State--- I was working with them on a state senate campaign. The guy that was running for the state senate happened to always be down at the supermarket I worked at, just handing out buttons and whatnot. He was a very nice guy, and I really liked him, and got to know him. And I was working at the service desk, and I said, "Yeah, I'll volunteer for you. I've done this before." That kind of thing... So, the person I worked under was Tim Murray and also Ed Augustus, who was our city manager, and we worked on a couple of other campaigns together. And they said, "You know, we're going to work for this guy Jim McGovern, he's our congressman." So I said, "Alright, I'll do it." And I just kind of followed the

herd and I worked on Jim's second campaign. And we actually worked for the other guy for his first campaign, who's this guy? Kevin O'Sullivan, who runs MassBioTech Initiatives--- great guy. But then we all worked for Jim McGovern in 1996, and it was one of the BEST campaigns to ever work on, and it was really remarkable, phenomenal, and fun. I think I was 20, maybe? Or 19? And from working on that, I got an invitation to Bill Clinton's inaugural ball.

**KS and SK:** Oh, wow.

**KMZ:** So, I have had an invitation, I was like 20, so I didn't go because I didn't really know anyone else that was going to be there, plus it was a lot of money. So--- but I have an invitation to every Democratic inaugural since that.

**SK:** Oh, wow.

**KMZ:** Al Gore got cheated out of his, but both of Barack Obama's.

**SK:** Really?

**KMZ:** Yeah, it's actually really cool stuff.

**SK:** I'm almost 20, and I haven't done half of the cool stuff that you did.

**KMZ:** Well, you should live in Worcester, and we'll get you connected. It's very easy, so fun stuff like that.

**KS:** Wow, that's really awesome! So, you talked about how your first job was at a supermarket, so I'm from the area, was it Goretta's?

**KMZ:** It was Shaw's.

**KS:** Oh, you worked at Shaw's?

**KMZ:** I worked at Shaw's on Gold Star Boulevard, which is now the Price Rite, and the Shaw's built a new building. So--- and here's the other thing, too. You see everybody, especially in this grocery store, you would see all the elected officials, and businessmen, and some would be wonderful, and some would be total jerks. So, you would kind of learn a lot about who you wanted to be or don't want to be. And it's not just about when people are looking. It's about when people aren't looking. Because you could have someone who everyone thinks is the greatest guy, but he's screaming at you because his milk is sour. Like, "Look sir, I work at the service desk, what am I--- what can I do to control this? I can get you your money back, but please don't scream at me." You know, you could see people being unreasonable. So, you kind of have to really make sense, even within the business community of who was a drip and who was great. And you also learn who you want to be, and who you don't want to be. So, I was at

Shaw's Gold Star Boulevard, and I met a bunch of kids from other schools because we were right on the corner of Doherty and Burncoat. I dated a lot of boys from Burncoat, no I'm just kidding. I dated some guys from St. John's, and we all worked together, and we are all friends still. Like it's been 20 years, and we are still friends. And we'll run into each other on the street and say, "Oh my God, hi." So it's funny, but it just shows the community, that whole community thing.

**SK:** First I wanted to ask a question before we ask another one.

**KMZ:** Sure.

**SK:** So, being involved in all these organizations and doing all that work, do you think that can shape one perspective of Worcester?

**KMZ:** Absolutely.

**SK:** Because I feel like you have gotten a lot out of Worcester. And someone who hasn't, who hasn't been involved in that many stuff can be like, "Oh Worcester isn't that great of a city because I haven't experienced all the things you did."

**KMZ:** Yeah.

**SK:** So, do you think that could be a big thing?

**KMZ:** Yeah, so, I was an advocate for Worcester before anyone was. We've come a long way in 20 years, we've come a long way. Twenty years, 26 years I would say. Once I was--- well let's see 26 years, '91. We've come a long way, we've taken our own initiative, we've revamped different areas of the city. Shrewsbury Street? You wouldn't walk down Shrewsbury Street, it was like Main South. It was crime infested. You would not go there. And there were one or two little restaurants, but you would never go there in dark. Mac's Diner was still there, a couple of others. But the Shrewsbury Street Merchants Association was like, "You know what eff' it, we are going to put the money into this, we are going to rebuild this." And look at this place now. And I'm like they did that themselves, without any help from city assistance, and then they started to get the attention of the city, and the city started to understand how to invest in it. The city had to think differently about governing. They wouldn't let anyone have outside seating on Shrewsbury Street, it was a whole big, huge issue. They wouldn't let anyone have outside seating downtown. And part of it was pushing out the old blood and bringing in the new blood that was more favorable to--- what does good urban development look like, and it kind of manifested there. I think I was 20 or 21 when I wrote an editorial, I was interning for the Worcester Magazine at the time, when I was 20, but on the sales side. I was on the devil's side. Whatever. I was still friends with all the people over in editorial. But I would press back when people would say stuff. And on the sales- side I would work with people who owned businesses in downtown, which has really come a long way. It was quite a sight 20 years ago. People would be like, "Oh

downtown sucks, blah blah blah, this is this this is uh.” And I would be like, “You own a business here how can you say this stuff? Don’t you want people in your business? Don’t you want this to work? Don’t you understand that they are going to take you at your word?” So, it was easy to see, especially with that experience growing up in Main South, that there’s perception and there’s reality. So, it very easy to take stand, and people will--- no matter what you do, people will galvanize and start being negative. And all it takes is one person to be like, “I disagree, I think Worcester is great, or I don’t think Main South is that bad.” When was the last time you were down there? And you start to confront them with the actual facts of that, and you can make a massive change in people’s perception.

**KZ:** The reality is that the glass can be half -full and half -empty no matter where you are, and it's the perception and the people around it. So, I think where Worcester has made their best strides lately is that we actually have a lot of people coming into the city, who are not native, who are embracing and celebrating what Worcester is. And then a groundswell of people who are native to the city, who have been driving that and pushing that are saying this is who we are. It doesn't have to be super shiny outside to be awesome on the inside. I remember seeing friends in college, like great. I always planned to just go to Boston, that was my thing and then we had the kids and whatnot, and I remember thinking when I was interning I’m like, “Okay so you are not going to intern in Boston and you're going to empty trash beds.” I’m writing all of the advertising and marketing strategies for nonprofits because the ad agency of five people that gave me this internship does it pro bono. So, I’m actually building a portfolio of stuff I can do. So, if I want to go to Boston in five years, I’m going to be here, (raises hand high up) I’m going to be at this level and you're still going to be entry level. Don’t you understand the opportunity here? It’s that you can actually launch your career, build a name for yourself, build a portfolio of your skillsets, and then, hey, you can go anywhere in the nation. Hopefully, you’ll love it enough that you’ll stay but you can go anywhere in the nation and be years ahead of your peers, because you’ve actually had an opportunity in the marketplace that is open to bringing younger folks in and giving them responsibilities.

**SK:** Wow, that's great stuff. Also, I wanted to ask you about if we can move away from politics.

**KZ:** Yeah.

**SK:** You talked about how you go to church, and I wanted to ask what role does religion play in your life, and how do you consider yourself spiritual?

**KZ:** Sure. So, it's actually a very interesting story. My parents were always Catholic, everyone their age was raised Catholic and I saw 70% of them never followed the religion, never made their kids go to CCD [Confraternity of Christian Doctrine] and whatnot. I don’t know if it was like a hippie backlash from the ‘70’, or the ‘80s, or whatnot. But it wasn’t really organized. So, my sister and I had some organized religion, and we would go to church here and there. But it was really more people in the neighborhood went, and we were friends with the family and we

kind of starting going back. I think it was during my parents' divorce and stuff. But it was never this meaningful, I shouldn't say it was never this meaningful thing. I actually think in the end it became more meaningful because I sought it out on my own when I was probably 24. I kind of went back to church, and now out of my dad's family of like five Catholics, I'm the only who goes to church... at all. I know it's a sin to lie, so I won't tell you I go every week because I don't. But, part of it was going to different places for mass, and one of the reasons why I chose Main South is that the pastor in Main South is wonderful. But Mount Carmel, which we're hearing all this stuff about, they are trying to tear it down now... The seven o'clock mass at Mount Carmel, you couldn't get in there. It was like packed to the gills. This was the difference I would see, and I see this in Auburn, too, which is why I still go to church in Main South. We have homeless people coming to church all the time. We have a woman with Tourette [Tourette Syndrome] who is walking around with a cup of coins and she is nuts. And she would scream and yell during mass and people would say, "Leave." And it just happens so much that you're not irritated anymore. In other church settings, sometimes more suburban, if an element like that comes in, it's not about if that's okay, it's about that shouldn't be allowed. So, you start to lose the whole meaning of what this stuff is. To me, this is the place, the church that embodies what I believe what the right path is. It doesn't mean I'm right, it's just what I see as the right path, I love the Catholic religion. I probably have more gay friends than straight friends, so you know there you go. And I think Pope Francis is awesome. I think we can be friends and hang out and I don't think these institutions would ever have an issue with anyone's sexual orientation or creed or whatever. I think it's all about being a good person and I think there are churches that are so bound up in the rules, because the rules are what we hold sacred, not the principles, I think that's part of becoming who you are. It's understanding that it's not just about, I mean frankly, I think the last time I went to confession, I can't even tell you because I was probably 18 or something. I take the communion all the time. I have no problem with it, while some people would be like "You're a heathen." I feel like, yeah generally at the same time you won't offer that bum bleeding on the street a band-aid? To me that's much more God-like, that's much more what the message is, what we're supposed to be doing. There is this rigidity by some people, but I think the Catholic Church is just beautiful. I think a lot of the things--- it's just, it speaks to me and I think... As long as there is--- as long as we have flexibility, and some people would say that's totally wrong, we shouldn't even be there in that church. But I think if you have that flexibility, it's not just about this rigidity over some of these rules and structures. And let's be honest, (leans ins and lowers voice) some made up a thousand years after Jesus walked the earth. You know I think you can find your place with it. So yeah, and that's a lot, I gave you guys a really long answer. (Smiles).

**KS:** Oh, wow this is beautiful. I really like that. Okay, so you talked about how you worked at Shaw's and how you've worked for Worcester Magazine. What other jobs have you had and what do you do now?

**KMZ:** Okay, so, I work in health insurance which some people would say is the dark side of the force, it's actually not. I work for a nonprofit health insurance, which is great. There is a powerful lesson here, I think, which is really know what you want to do and what you enjoy

doing. And there were crossroads in my life that relate to work and stuff that I'm so grateful that I took the right path. The first thing was leaving Assumption. So, my parents both went to Worcester State and they--- you know what? I'm raising these two kids half the time and my mom was like, "You're never going to get a job," because she had a hard time. But it was in a very different time, and there was the recession and she was a single mom and whatnot. And I said look, "I already know half the people in this marketplace from a business standpoint, I've been volunteering, I've been meeting them politically. I'm not worried about getting a job. I will, but right now the social thing is so key for me." And I went from being like the queen of my high school, to not knowing anyone, I couldn't relate to anyone. So, you have to know when something works and doesn't work. It doesn't mean you throw it all away without making a rational decision. So, I did my research and I looked and I said, "Look, communications is my bag, that's what I want to do. I love marketing, I love all this stuff, they don't have it at Assumption. So, let's be honest. I'm going to do better being able to find the job if I actually have the training. So, we're going to go to Worcester State and not worry about the job and I'll pay for myself." So, sell them on it, right? So, go to Worcester State and there are a couple things that I think are the same at every institution. So, first of all, I felt more comfortable because there are other people with competing priorities: i.e., working two jobs to be there, doing this at night when they have kids. So, I felt like thank God, at least, at least I'm not just around, you know, 18 year- old girls who don't have to worry about anything. Because I have all these responsibilities, and it's really hard not to be a part of this or not be a part of this. So, I made that big leap, got there and realized pretty quickly that it's the same amount of work, it's all about what you put into it. So, you can walk out and be a master and an expert, or you can walk out like my husband did, with a piece of paper that really won't do much for you, right? And it all comes down to what you, *you* are the product. You are there to be molded, right? So, if you don't take that learning as your work, you're not going to walk out with something concrete and tangible. So, well in college I did take to heart with my parents that--- and there were a lot of college with name brands and you know business universities and whatnot. Then I started saying, "Experience trumps everything," so I wrote the most horrific marketing plan for Blue Jeans Pizza. But I had the experience of putting together enough comprehensive marketing plan and accessing their audiences and going through all this stuff. It, it, wasn't even a course I had taken at Worcester State, it was just something that I stumbled upon and a teacher said to me--- I had wanted to be in broadcasting. I was a lot thinner then, and she was like, "I don't think you want to broadcast, I think you'll hate it so I'm going to send you on to assignments. You're going to go tell this reporter from channel 3. And then I want you to, you know, to read five articles in advertising." Which I was like okay. So, I tell this reporter on Channel 3 I wanted to come myself, hated it. I read one advertisement in article h, I said, "She's brilliant, I want to be in advertising," like there is no question. So, she saw that and that was wonderful. Advertising and PR [public relations]so then to me, since they didn't have the major, it was get all the experience you can. I called up the Ad Club of Greater Worcester. I started interning for them and lo and behold, the woman who owned an agency in Rennet is someone who I waited on all the time at Shaw's. Isn't that like crazy?

**KS:** Small world.

**KMZ:** Totally small world in Worcester. So, I'm in school, I started working for Worcester Magazine for the summer. It's fun, I had no intentions of working there. I get three job offers out of college, which is great. I take one for a trade show company, I build up a portfolio. I really can't stand my boss. The owner's passed, but I'm still friends with his wife and stuff because they offered me a job right out of college. Did a great job for them, hated it after six months and I'm like, "You know what, I am out of here." I called up the people, who I worked with at Worcester Magazine, and I was like, "Look I kind of need a job and I don't want to do this anymore." And they said, "We don't really have anything, but you know you did pretty well here over the summer, so we're going to actually move someone into another role and have you take their position." I went there, stayed there for a year and I loved it. So much fun. But I didn't approach it as do you want to buy an ad? I approached it as, it's what you build it, yourself. I would go into a company and say okay, you're Ed Heider Specialty Market, this isn't just about you buying an ad. This is about communicating the reasons why people are going to start shopping at your store, pulling out things like, Martha Stewart, she goes to a bread store in Westport, Connecticut. She goes, "We don't have a bread store in Worcester." We didn't then. But we do have spices, we do have Mediterranean food, we need to tease out the value of that and make this an experience and a boutique, we need to do that through your advertising. So, I would talk about where they were, where they needed to be, bridge their goals, do some of that marketing advertising bridge for them, which they are paying agencies thousands of dollars to do and I'm doing it for free. But, I would get a customer for life because their advertising would actually work, right? You can have the right vehicle, wrong message. We made--- we had the right vehicle and the right message. There were people who would say, "Well I want to buy this." And I think, I don't think this is right for you. I think you should buy radio or whatever. So, I had this consultative approach, and it really worked well. But I really wanted to do what I planned because I was stupid and I thought it would be fun, it's awful, it's terrible. So, I started volunteering to do event planning and stuff. It was like a food fight trying to pick out the flowers, which I'm really good at, but 80 people were in line ahead of me to pick out the flowers. And when you would go around--- and still to this day go around any volunteer that is planning an event... "Who is doing the menu?" "I am," 20 people raise their hands. "Who is doing the decor?" "I am." "Who is doing the entertainment?" "I am." "Who is selling the sponsorships?" Crickets. No one raises their hands. That's the whole point of having a fundraiser, so you can pick out your menu a week before, you can pick out your decor a week before. You cannot sell \$200,000 in sponsorships a week before. It takes a year, it takes six months. So, I just started doing that work because it is related to the work I did at Worcester Magazine and selling ads. And I knew a lot of business folks, so I started bringing in a lot of sponsorships. First event I ever ran, running sponsorships, was the opening of Union Station 1999. Union Station was a horrible pit. Google it, you guys will die when you see pictures of it. So, we just started renovating Union Station, massive project for the city of Worcester, definitely a turning point. And then I wanted to make \$30,000, so I start lining out here's who's going to want to go. We need to sell this in sponsorships, this in sponsors and this in tickets and people have to be on the waiting list for tickets. They want to come to this event they are going to want to be in, they are going to have to buy in through sponsorships. So, Fred Smith from ABC company wants to come

in, he is going to have to pay \$5,000 to do it because he can buy his two tickets that way or he can just buy them on the street. But we're only going to have a 100 of those tickets, we're going to have 900 of this. We open this thing, I think we had 800 people there, 500 people there. We made a \$125,000.

**KS:** Wow.

**KMZ:** Yeah, I was like holy cow! So instantly that, I was like how did I do that? It wasn't just me, it was a lot of people. Part of it was the organization and understanding the marketplace, why would they buy, what do they need to hear, what do you need to communicate and whatnot. So, I kept doing this fundraising and I got really, really, really good at it. And I started getting job offers all the time because I'm in marketing, I'm selling advertising, the people I work with marketing leaders at companies who are like, "You should come work for me," and I'm like, "I love what I am doing, I am having so much fun, I work probably 20 hours a week, don't tell anyone, but it's great." I'm making more money than I thought I would. I love it. I don't think I can sit in an office. And then one day I get a call from Fallon Community Health Plan, and I was engaged at this point, and Fallon call and they say, "We'd like for you to come for us and run our foundation." I'm 26 years- old, they have 200 people applying for this job and they call me. I've never met them in my life, right? So, I'm like wow. So, I'm thinking thank God I was well-behaved on two fronts. Number one, Richard Burke who is their CEO [Chief Executive Officer], who is an Assumption grad, and who is on the board at here at Assumption, is my boss. He is the one that called me and said, "Come work for me." He was chief of staff for the county treasurer, Arthur Chase, and I actually worked on a campaign against him, (laughs) and thank God I was well- behaved, because I wasn't always well- behaved. But Worcester is a really small world, if I had been a bad person, I never would have gotten this job, because he would have known my name and would have wanted me dead.

**KS:** (Laughs).

**KMZ:** So, they just would have been like, "She's not the kind of person who we want." So, thank God, I was- well behaved for that campaign. But the market started to know where that fundraising was, so I got into healthcare and again. I have this marketing and sales knack. I just know how to do it, and little by little bit, they asked me to start doing other things. I became their lobbyist. "Guys, I don't know anything about healthcare policy." "Well, you can get every single door in the state open." "Yeah, I can. I have worked on a lot of campaigns, but I don't know anything about healthcare." "You'll learn it, trust me." "Okay fine." We started becoming one of the most effective lobbying arms of any of the health plans in the state. I'm like, "Wow okay," so it parlayed into this world where I understood the end to end operations of health plans, never intended to do that, never wanted to do that. But I like it, and I have this lens of how to make it work within different marketplaces, and that's what I do now. I do that for Harvard Pilgrim because no one really can make a go of it in Central Mass. People sit in Providence, or in Hartford, or in Boston, and they think they get it, but they don't understand how you need our marketplaces. It's like if you can make it here, you can make it anywhere. And not only can we

capture this marketplace, but then we can roll, we can parlay that expertise into Maine and New Hampshire, all the other places that feel second fiddle to these, you know, major cities, and it works.

**KS:** Oh wow.

**KMZ:** So, that's a very long answer, but it's great, it's wonderful. It's--- I'm grateful for having the initiative and having the opportunities.

**SK:** Also, you talked about the path you have chosen. Oh, we can cut it short or we can make it longer.

**KMZ:** I can go a little longer, if you guys want.

**KS:** Okay so, seems like you had a really interesting childhood, upbringing especially through your college--- how you raised your sister's kids and how you're really close. It seems like you're really close to your mom. So, kind of, who were your role models growing up? Like why were they your role models? Who inspired you to be this strong, independent, great...

**KMZ:** Yeah, I'm not that independent.

**KS:** Achiever. (chuckles).

**SK:** And who are your role models right now, too?

**KMZ:** So, wow, that is a really tough question. Okay, my role models... I know I will never ever, ever be able to emulate because I just don't have the discipline that they have, and this is going to sound so goofy, but Jackie Kennedy. I love the guts of her. I think she is just grace under pressure, she's so--- I mean she's dead, but when she was alive...

**SK:** Yeah (nodding in agreement).

**KMZ:** She was just the epitome of...

**SK:** That is so true.

**KMZ:** Of class and appropriateness. I'm the most inappropriate person I know, but she remains an idol. And I just look at that, and I'm, like holy cow. The discipline to not say what you're thinking, so that's almost an anti-feminist role model, right? I love Mary Tyler Moore because to me she was the life of the workplace, right? So if you--- if on Facebook--- like my Facebook profile pictures are either Mary Tyler Moore or Jackie Kennedy, I don't use my own pictures at all, never have. So, so--- but I love--- because I feel like she pulled everyone together in a way where you have more genuine relationships you might not otherwise. So, they are fictional

characters, and some of them are so untouchable but those were my role models. Locally, oh here's another fictional one--- okay big impact on my life, George Bailey. So, I've never seen *It's a Wonderful Life*. I see it when I'm raising these two kids, and I'm, I'm--- like I lost friends, I couldn't relate to my friends anymore and they couldn't relate to me, and you see it happen at different thresholds in your life. Some people will go away to college, some people don't. And all of the sudden you lose some of that commonality with your friends. And, some will stick around, but 80 percent of them you're going to shed. And it's very hard, especially in that stage in your life because you really don't, you don't know that that's just how life is. You have friends you think are your best friends, and then you leave the job and you lose that commonality and you have nothing in common. You still like each other, but you're just not who you were, you needed that bridge to connect, right? I was shell shocked as I saw relationships change, and I saw people just not--- so wrapped in their own worlds that they couldn't spare the time to pay attention to mine. It was hurtful, right? So, I'll never forget. I saw *It's a Wonderful Life* and I was like, "I'm meant to be the George Bailey of Worcester. I'm meant to--- on my watch make sure this is the best community and that anyone can come to me and I'll help them do whatever." I mean I don't own the Bailey Saving and Loan, but I think there was a level of responsibility he felt for his community even though it wasn't his first wish. So, he--- that, that story--- he is a fictional character, but he is a huge hero to me, right? So, I admire people who have that skill. Annette Rafferty at Abby's House, she, she was a role model then and today. She was commissioned to do a study on homeless women in Worcester, and she came out with this data set that was absolutely appalling about women, children who are homeless, women who wouldn't leave bad situations because they had no place to go, all this other stuff. And I'm not going to say the entity that commissioned her, because they chose not to do anything about it, and she was like, "I'll do it myself." and she opens up Abby's House. I was like...

**KS:** Can you tell us what Abby's house is?

**KMZ:** Oh, Abby's House is a shelter for women, homeless women, and they work in a couple of different formats. So, they work a lot with the --- a lot of women are coming out of abusive relationships so they restart at a Daybreak facility, which is safe houses for them, and then transition into Abby's House shelter with their kids, because there are very few shelters that will care for women and their children. And they will build them into their own self- sustainability and then there is a more individual type unit, but it's people who have been homeless, women who are in need and they will stay there for a longer term. So, they will be there for a period of two to three years, but it's a place where people can go. It's a hot meal, and it is a service just to women in Central Mass that are in need, and didn't have those kinds of service before. So she is, she is just--- she didn't know what she was doing, she was like, "We're not going to walk away from this, I can't believe you people are not going to do anything about it. We just showed you that it's even worse than we thought, and you're not going to do anything?" So, she was like, "Well," and she was a nun actually. And Sister Rafferty, she was like, "Well, I guess we're going to do this," and she went ahead and did it.

**KS:** Wow.

**KMZ:** So, so those are the kind of role models. One is the former city manager of Worcester, he is a very good friend, his name is Michael Ryan. But to me he was the author of all the changes we've seen. It took someone who was willing to--- someone with his level of talent, should be making millions of dollars a year, right? But he took this job in Worcester because he could see where the gaps were and knew, knew he could do it right. And you push a lot of balls uphill, and there is a lot of resistance to change, but he did it. And he probably worked 80 hours a week doing it for about 10 years, but he did, and he wouldn't leave until we were at this tipping point where City Square was done and whatnot. And, every day I wish I could be as thoughtful and strategic as he is. So, those, those are the role models.

**SK:** Oh, that's beautiful. And well, you were talking about how basically Jackie Kennedy, like you love her and it's kind of anti-feminist...

**KMZ:** Yeah.

**SK:** But do you think, I mean, do you relate to feminism in any way? And, I mean, do you consider yourself a feminist? And, also in your own words, how do you define feminism?

**KMZ:** So, it's weird, it's kind of like the church. I have my own balance right? My own rationale--- I think--- do you guys like *Star Wars*?

**SK:** I love *Star Wars*. I'm a big *Star Wars* fan.

**KMZ:** Ok, I'm a huge *Star Wars* nerd.

**SK:** Same.

**KMZ:** So, if you're a 110% into anything, you're probably wrong, right? The balance, the right balance, is somewhere in the middle. Maybe it's 70-30, maybe it's 50-50, maybe it's 80-20 who knows, right? But the reality is that you, you can't be so rigid in your beliefs that you lose flexibility.

**SK:** Uh huh.

**KMZ:** The people who succeed are the people who are like, "I know this person is a complete drip, but if I win, that's the best revenge. So, I'm going to work with them graciously and know, it's going to be painful. It's going to be pride- swallowing, it's going to be awful, but I'm going to win and I'm going to do it." So, there will be folks, who I see, that are like, "Can you believe this, we have no women at the table?" And I'm like, "Honestly, yeah I get it, and they are no women at the head table, but you know what? I'd rather have no women at the head table than have a token person who no one is listening to, because that happens a lot, too." Sometimes if you force your way in and you really know what you're doing and become part of the dialogue

it's great, but there... I know I'm one of the people---Susan Mailman, who owns Coghlin Companies... I don't know if you guys have ever heard of her or interviewed her, she is a great person to do. She is a woman in a man's world, she shows up to meetings in Birkenstock jeans, she doesn't care, she is brilliant, she is smart, she does a great job, very good friend of mine. I love her to pieces, and she is like, "You know though there will be times when someone needs something fixed or they need someone on the board and your name or my name will come up, and people will be like, 'Ahhh,,' because we're not going to settle for crap. I can be the most popular chick in Worcester business if I'm willing to just shut my mouth and take it. I'm not."

**KS:** Mmm.

**KMZ:** I got to pick my battles. Does it kind of suck that there is no woman at that particular table? Yeah, but it's a C-list event, do I really care? Am I going to kill myself? Am I going to fall on that sword? Noo. There are better swords to fall on, and part of it is doing things right. So, we had a fundraiser for the mayor, my friend Kate and I did, Kate Sherry. And usually those fundraisers, they're small and you raise about two grand and whatnot. So, we are doing this woman's fundraiser, and so the person who we're working with is like, "You know I'd really like 50 people there, and I'd like to raise two grand." I'm like, "Okay we're going to have a 150 people there, we're going to raise about eight grand." And they are like, "Can you do that?" And it's hard when you're raising for a politician because--- I think Republicans do it better or even for state offices. But these are \$25 checks, these are not--- whatever. So, we build this fundraiser and we're like here's the deal, we're going to pay--- we're only going to charge 83 cents on the dollar because we're only paid 83 cents. So instead of making a \$100 donation, you make an \$83 donation. So, \$ 50 you make \$46, instead of 25, you make whatever it is. So, we do it, and we build this host community because I was like, "I don't want five people on the host committee, I want a 100. I want everyone to see who is on there. They are lending their names to this thing." We had this event, that people are still talking about, and they are saying, "This is the best women's event that ever happened in the city of Worcester." So now my friend, Kate, and I have done it. So, we kind of know how to do it again we're like, "Alright we're going to do this event once a year, we're going to pick who benefits from it." This year it will be Congressman McGovern, and next year it might be the mayor again or whatnot, but rather than be condescended to by this group and take offense and be like, "Ooh what should I do?" Like great, "I'll see your \$2,000, and I'll quadruple it. We're going to kill dude." Don't even--- So it's not worth the fight, you know? And some people just want to be offended and I'm like, "I don't have the time," plus now I feel crappy, and it's not--- it doesn't accomplish anything. There are times-- - oh gosh, I'm going to say something really bad. I won't say names, but there is a leader of an entity where there is a fundamental flaw in their revenue stream, and it's been there prior to this person being there and I'm on their board. And I know they hate it every year. I raise my hand when we're going over the budget, and I say, "You aren't going to meet these revenue numbers." "Well how can you say that?" "Because you've never met them, right? You set the budget on fantasy. I want a plan, plan is not the number you need to reach, it is how you're going to reach it with detail. I can't get that from you, so I know you're not going to reach your number." And I don't say it quite that plainly, but I've said it very diplomatically, and you know I really like to

talk to folks, should we have a membership committee? Should we do something like this? Dismissed, dismissed, dismissed. So, I stopped fighting, they want to watch their organization go down the drain, I care for it, but I can't be everything to everyone. A guy raises his hand this year and asks the same question, a new board member that I've asked for six years, and all of the sudden, the leadership listens. And I was like, "I'm ten times smarter than this guy."

**KS:** (Laughs)

**KMZ:** He is a great guy but like, he's not going to have the solution either. So rather than get pissy about it, I just joined the committee. I was like, "Oh good, I've been waiting for this forever, I'll join your committee, whatever." We just ran circles around everything they needed to do because we're both awaiting instructions and whatnot. So, I sent it over to this guy and he was like, "Wow I wish I could say I created this, this is amazing." I'm like, "Yeah, I know."

**KS:** (Laughs)

**KMZ:** So, it's like not worth fighting it, but I've had people... The eye roll is discrimination, if I was a guy they wouldn't care if I was pushy, they wouldn't care, if I was a guy I might not do such a great job, I might be fine with 70 percent success, instead of taking it to as good as I know we can have it. It is a problem, it's always going to be a problem. But I can either let it stop me, or just move on and not care. I know that it's better now than it was 10 years ago, and it was better then, than it was 10 years before and that every generation, every decade, we are going to make a little more progress and sometime, it won't be that problem, and we'll have new battles and new rights to fight every year. The problem with the women's rights is that—

**KS:** Wow this is beautiful, you know our questions and everything!

**SK:** Yeah, you did answer all our questions—

**KMZ:** Some people would say I talk too much.

**SK and KS:** No! No, that's great!

**KMZ:** The problem is that, it's that we've had issues around racial equality and sexual equality and whatnot, and the women's thing--- (sighs) it's so hard. Black men could own property before women could. We both should have owned property at the same time, right? When we look at who we held in disdain and who we didn't, and whatnot, woman, though a first-class citizen, has always been a fourth-class citizen, always been the challenge and it's still accepted here today. So, I think about that, and I get so pissed, but I know we're making progress and I know we're getting there. But I also know that if Hillary Clinton was a guy, she would have been CEO. But she was a chick, so we have to deal with this balance of being, becoming and being warm and being nice and not being rigid and bitchy and it's...No guys are held to this standard, and it's freaking impossible! But it's impossible! It's impossible! That's one of the challenges with it and

it's always going to be there, so sometimes you just pretend that it doesn't exist, and **you just try** to blow them away with results. That's all I can do.

**KS:** Yeah that's great. Alright, so this is our last question.

**KMZ:** I'm sorry I went on so long.

**KS and SK:** Oh no, that is perfect! You did a great job.

**KMZ:** Oh, you guys are so sweet, thank you.

**KS:** (Laughs). Ok, so based on your life experience, what advice would you give to women of today and future generations?

**KMZ:** I would say, know your stuff and don't be afraid. Know that you can do whatever you want to do, and don't let anyone else define that for you. And when you're scared, it's actually good. I hate being scared, I actually have anxiety which most people would not think is true, but I get terrible panic attacks, but it is, it is your body forcing you to push through something, right? So, you do it, and it's the only way to make it go away, because you have the experience and you're not afraid of that kind of thing anymore. The unknown is terrifying to me, most people don't know that. But don't ever guess that you can't. We sort of talk up here and then we have to do it. Yeah, I can do that, and you're like, "Holy crap, how the hell am I going to get this done?" You'll figure it out, so never limit yourself. Know, know that there are things that might be out of your depth or not your area of expertise, and don't set yourself up to fail. I'm not saying take on everything that comes your way, but also don't dismiss yourself as an option. So, the job I have now is vice president. I called one of my friends, who is a guy, great guy and I said to him, "I'm going to apply for this job." He is the senior director, and he said, "Yeah, I think you should do it." And I was like, "If it, if it was the senior director, I know I'd get it." And he goes, "Why are you so hung up on this word, vice president?" And I'm like, "I don't know." And he's like, "If I was up there, I'd go for it." He was the senior director and he was looking for another job. And I'm like, "If you got this job and I didn't, I would freaking kill you at this because I'm way better at this." And he goes, "Think of it this way, if you don't apply for this job, someone not as good is going to get it, and you're going to kick yourself." And I was like, "Oh you're right, there is no one better than me for this job, you're right!"

**KS:** (Laughs)

**KMZ:** So, I get all fired up and you still, you have your moments of weakness when you're scared and stuff, but don't limit yourself. I limited myself, I was like, "Oh gosh, that's such a big job and blah blah blah," and he was like, "Look, they say a guy applies for a job when he is 60 percent sure he can do it. A woman applies when she is a 110 percent sure she can do it." And that's not an exaggerated metric, like they have to know they can do it and then some. To be willing to apply, a guy does not have that barrier. We need to stop limiting ourselves, we need to

just go for it. The other thing I would say is... I don't know how to say this nicely. Make the people who are worth it, prove to you that they are worth it. Be friends with everyone, but be cautious. Sometimes it's the ones you'd never expect, and sometimes other women are so vicious, they are so nasty and vicious you would be just shocked. But they are typically the ones who don't have, who don't hold much value to themselves, maybe they are one-dimensional or there is one thing that they do well, but they haven't quite figured it out, and you're such a threat to them, that they will be nasty. There is no way to not make it bother you, but you just got to know that it's out there. And then the last thing would be, pick your battles and know your stuff, because that's probably the places where I cringe. You know sometimes you, you've made such a misstep and you think back on it, and you physically go, "Oh, I can't believe I did that." It's usually when I didn't pick my battles, and when I didn't maybe know my stuff and jumped on some things... So, some of these sort of--- as we're talking about the feminist thing, and you know the absolutes, it's great to be passionate about something but be passionate about-- be balanced in your passion, because if you're too much or another, you'll look like a fruit loop and no one is going to listen to you.

**SK and KS:** (Laughs)

**KMZ:** And those aren't--- and if I had embodied those things younger, wow I'd probably be the President of the United States by now. And I didn't, and we all learn these things. So, that'd be the last thing I'd say. And anyone can do anything, anyone can do anything, (whispers) *anyone*. So, it doesn't matter what your perceived deficits are. Like I grew up poor, I grew up black, I grew up a girl, I grew up here, I don't have this education. We make those means, we might have to work a little bit harder to create a level playing field, but you do it and you're going to be running circles around everyone because the secret is most people don't work that hard... some people work that hard. You'll kill it, every time.

**SK and KS:** Wow, thank you so much.

**KMZ:** Thank you guys.