

Interviewee: Joy Rachelle Murrieta
Interviewers: Pamela Rios and Alexis Whatley
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Massachusetts
Transcribers: Pamela Rios and Alexis Whatley
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Abstract:

Joy Rochelle Murrieta was born in Sandwich, Massachusetts in 1986 and attended Crown College where she studied Music Performance and Christian studies. In this interview Joy was 31 years old. Joy identifies as half-Mexican, her mother is white and is from Colorado, and her father is Mexican. Joy's family move around while she was growing, and she discusses some of her experiences in different parts of Massachusetts and Colorado. Joy opens up about the hardships she went through while growing up with her mother and sister having medical problems. Joy is single, and now works as a music teacher at the Worcester Music Academy, as a freelance musician, and runs a nonprofit organization called Main Idea. Main Idea is a camp that parents can bring their children to where they can learn about the arts. In this interview Joy shares her passions for music and children, as well as the previous jobs she held such as a barista and working at Guitar Center, which lead to the jobs she has secured now. Joy also highlights an inside look on the daily life as a woman pedestrian and how it affects her navigation around the streets of Worcester getting to work, home, and other places in and around Worcester. Joy gives us thought provoking answers on her political standing and her personal views on what it is like to be a working woman in Worcester. In this interview Joy touches upon on how we can make Worcester a healthier place, more accessible for the arts, and speaks on some movements and events that have been beneficial for the arts renaissance in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Quote:

“I try to give myself this advice every day. That is, don't ever let fear be the reason you don't do something, go for something. If that's the reason, do it anyways. And two, try to pace yourself. Try to be gracious with yourself and others.”

PR: Where are you from?

JM: I'm from ---or like my family --- I'm half Mexican. My dad is Mexican and my mom, white. My dad is from LA [Los Angles] and my mom is from Colorado. We all ended up here in Massachusetts.

PR: What is your full name, including both maiden name and married if applicable?

JM: Joy Rochelle Murrieta, no maiden name.

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PR: When were you born?

JM: 1986, November 11th.

PR: Have you ever been married?

JM: Nope, no.

PR: Do you have any children?

JM: No.

PR: Which cultures or ethnicities do you identify with?

JM: Biracial, you don't really fall into any category, you are on a grey line. But I think passing as White, I still identify more as Mexican, more so than White, even though I don't really fall into the one category or the other just because we grew up with more of those (Mexican) traditions in our household.

PR: Where have you lived during your life?

JM: We moved a lot. My dad is a pastor. He pastors right now in Norfolk. He was a senior pastor for quite some time and they just moved to Norfolk. I believe he is an assistant Pastor now. He is there for counsel rather than overseeing everything. Anyways, when--- if you are an army brat or a pastor's kid, you have one thing in common, which is you move a lot. Particularly, he was a church planter, so we moved quite a bit. Once he had established one church, we would move to someplace else. I was born on the Cape [Cape Cod], I was born in Sandwich, Massachusetts.

AW: I live on the Cape.

JM: Really where?

AW: I live in South Yarmouth.

JM: I love the Cape. It used --- you know ---it's really touristy right now but back in the day, when I was younger, it was not, and it was awesome. Now it's super expensive to live there, and I was like we should have bought that house so we can keep it. I was born in Sandwich, we lived there till like about the third grade. Well, I was born in Weymouth, but we lived in Sandwich and then when I was in third grade, we moved to Colorado to be closer to my mom's family, that's where she is from. My dad was like a traveling musician at the time. He was in a band and they would travel a lot, that's how they met. Anyways, we've moved dozens of times and I can't keep

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count of how many houses we've lived in but the main places we lived really is Colorado, mom's home town, Fort Collins, where I went to high school. We were there for quite some time. They--- my family --- when I went to college, I went to college in Saint Pine Fishes Minnesota, which is basically the middle of nowhere in Minnesota, or just a very small town, they moved to Massachusetts and they lived in Worcester. So, when I was done in college, I moved to Worcester. And then they moved to Norfolk, and I have stayed in Worcester since. I think one year of my life when we were in Massachusetts, I think we lived in California for a year, I don't remember when I was young, because that's where my dad's from, from LA. So, lots of places.

PR: If you were not born in Worcester, when did you arrive, your age, and how did you come to live in Worcester?

JM: So, kind of playing of the previous question. When I graduated college, I lived here in Worcester, that was 2009. Since 2009 I've lived in Worcester. They'd (family) stayed in Worcester county. I lived in Holden for a year last year. But I still worked in Worcester. I consider Worcester my home.

PR: What challenges do you think the city still faces? What would you change about the city?

JM: Oh, man what a loaded question! (Laughs). What challenges, what challenges... (question repeated) ... thinks this city faces? That's a good question. I think about this a lot. So, as someone who considers Worcester her home and has for quite some time--- you know and I didn't really live here--- I lived a lot of places, as I kind of said. And having made this my home for quite some time, you notice things that are different than maybe other cities or states that you've lived in and areas both, you know, strengths and areas of improvement. I think, and I think a lot about--- and I have a personality that builds things. It's like what makes me tick, I like to create things from nothing and do things from scratch. And, you know, I started a nonprofit. It's why I even--- at this job at the music school, like I like to start new programs and I like to start things, it's my kind of thing. So, when you are a person that likes to start things, you are always looking for areas of improvement. It's just like your default setting. What could be better? What could we change? What could we do differently? What can we do that's outside the box? Right. So, I think about that question a lot. About Worcester's areas of improvement, not like in a resentful way, some days maybe but, or sometimes but, in a growth oriented type of way. So, I guess--- such a loaded question--- so many things, so many areas of growth that we could have. It's seriously such a loaded question, I have to think about it for a second. (Laughs, pauses).

PR: You can do the top three.

JM: I'll do the top three then. As a musician, someone who plays out in Worcester--- I perform out in Worcester as--- and then I teach here and go to things here that are music related. As a

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musician in Worcester, I think that there is a lot of room for improvement. What was the original question? (Question repeated) Is that still answering the question? Areas of improvement? (Affirmative). As a musician, I think that there is a lot of room for this city to make it more musician friendly. I think that since I was in a band when I moved here--- I started a band and noticed that like what is like, and still is like, to gig in greater Worcester. I think that people can be very territorial. I think that we often saturate our fan base and try to stick to what we know or who we know rather than being... For a while the only place you could play were bars and that was it (laughs). Nobody booked musicians. And then there was an influx of restaurants coming in. New restaurants, there were like 50 restaurants over the past how many, over two years, five years, tons of new restaurants strictly in the canal district. And these restaurants---- that was good for me as a musician because these restaurants were open-minded. The idea of, "Oh we can have musicians come," and they didn't already know and have all their people who they usually have come in and play. They are like, "Oh well who's the musician in the area?" They are a lot more open- minded, and they are willing to have more people they didn't have before because you know they were brand new. So that, for me, opened the door for me to be able to play in other places rather than in bars, which was nice because that's what I wanted to do. And I think I'm more of a restaurant type of venue anyway. So, going back to the question, I think that we could make our city more open-minded I guess in terms of new music, definitely. I think it's hard to get people to want to listen to, or seek out, or find, be interested even in like new music in Worcester. And that can be frustrating as a musician, but I think even just that attitude in general is kind of, can kind of stay in our city, you know. We stick to what we know, I don't know. (Laughs) I don't know how to say it without sounding very sarcastic, or cynical is the word. I think and I have to--- sorry I have to talk because I am a verbal processor, so I have to figure out what I am thinking. I need to know what I am saying. (Pause) I think that sometimes we get in our own way, Worcester sometimes gets in its own way. If it's not something we already know, or already used to, I think there can be this hostility toward it, that goes for music, that goes for even like... You know, we had that art festival that pow wow festival, that took a lot of adjustment in people. Like we are just not used to having nice things sometimes. I think we get in our own way, and it takes us maybe a little bit of hostility at first to realize that something can be different, or something can be new, and that's okay in Worcester. And that's good for our economy and that's good for our city to try and do things, and not just be so afraid that we are going to lose what we have, and not open ourselves to look towards the horizon or broaden our horizons to something new. All of that to say we can resist change and get in our own way. So, you can cut out the rest of what I said and stick to that point.

PR: What changes have you seen in Worcester over time?

JM: It's funny how I keep answering the next question or leading into the next question. Good changes. While that hostility is still there, I do see people kind of like, "Alright I guess this could kind of work," and have hope. I guess, like something new or even like something that we tried a decade ago, can be done now, and just the belief that something could be different and better. Specifically, changes, what I said earlier of there being like an influx. We are in a renaissance,

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Worcester is in the middle of a renaissance right now. There are a ton of new restaurants that just opened up, so there is like a food renaissance going on. But that has opened more doors to--- like I think there is an art renaissance going on as well. There are musicians playing now, and I am one of them in Worcester. And like our music scene is slowly but surely broadening a little bit. There are so many people working for the city that are trying to bring in more art. Everybody is feeling the buzz. There is this like--- something is brewing, like let's do something with art. In the past five years, I've seen--- we've had two mural festivals--- pow wow Worcester mural festivals, that's huge and it happen twice. And that's over 50 murals that went up in our city. That's like one area of art that has happened. We have had so many more festivals out in the common. People are working to get other people to hang out at the Common [Worcester Common] and do things. We have food trucks now. We have music that happens downtown in the Common. We have all these different events, like the Worcester one hundred. Everyone is trying to bring in different ideas and parties, to bring people to the events, not to mention all the apartment complexes that are going up. Worcester is becoming more livable. We are on the verge of something really big. There are changes, so many changes, and economical changes definitely in the arts. Creative Hub, they are friends of Main Idea, the nonprofit I run. They are building this huge space for artists to come in. It's not even finished, it is probably going to be finished in two years, but it's happening now. The theatre district is going through a revitalization. They just opened a conservatory for kids. But even the building in front of me is getting redone. So, all these changes are about to happen for the arts, has already happened for the arts. Even my organization, Main Idea, a nonprofit for youth and arts., we started six years ago, and we are happy to be part of that artistic influx happening in Worcester. So, a lot with the arts but even in our economy we have Heart to Hub. Sorry, I can talk all day about this--- We now have trains going from Worcester into Boston, and we did not have that before. And that is huge for our economy. So many changes have happened.

PR: What do you think women's experiences in Worcester has generally been?

JM: Interesting question. (Pause) I am still growing to understand the answer to that question as a woman of Worcester. I think, good and bad things, good experiences and bad experiences. Good being like there are a lot of women's organizations that exist in Worcester, and there are a lot of women running businesses who are really stake holders in the community, Off the top of my head, like Queen's Cups [Queens's Cup Bakeshop]... So many business women in this renaissance, whether it be in restaurants or the arts. It's really cool to see, and I am learning about all these women who are changing Worcester and are part of the change. I think when I first started teaching music here in 2011, I started with my own studio, not teaching with any institution but myself, and was a sole provider for a while. I think I was able to succeed, and grow my student base so much that I merged it here. And now I work for the Worcester Music Academy. I was able to succeed at my job so much because, one, I think I am good at my job, but two, it's not just that you are good at it, but you also have to have the right things involved. There wasn't a lot of women music teachers who teach what I teach, which is guitar, alternative style of music. There is a lot of men in that field, so I didn't have any competition at all. Parents

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who wanted their kids to learn felt more comfortable having a female teacher teach their, you know, teen or young daughter. So, that gave me a lot of opportunities. Back to the question though. I think women are part of this renaissance, maybe I feel like it (Worcester) was a man's city for quite some time, mostly male- run, men were in charge of a lot. And now with all this new stuff coming in, I feel like women are rising to the top which is exciting. (Laugh) At the same time, I walk to work every day. I am a female pedestrian in Worcester and I have to, you know--- I can't tell you how many times just as being--- committing the crime of walking while being female, you get cat -called just because, you know, because there is not a lot of pedestrian life around here, which is another thing. Another challenge, that I think we face, is pedestrian life, cultivating that more. But, you know, I guess that's in every city. But being a female pedestrian, it's not a great experience. I would like to feel more safe walking in my city, and not have to put on the armor of when I come in here, my earbuds and my sunglasses, you know, to keep guys from talking or hollering at me trying to get my attention, you know what I mean?

PR: Yes.

JM: I will be wearing like, it doesn't matter what I'll be wearing, I don't even---we don't have to go into that can of worms right now.

PR: We can go more into it.

JM: A challenge we face is, that both women face is... To sum it up, a challenge we face today is pedestrian life, and we need to get more of that and we need foster that, to make things more walkable and friendly, get people walking more. As someone who does do that, who walks to work and walks to things downtown, that is kind of a crappy experience, as a woman I would have to say. I'm very long-winded, if you couldn't tell. (Laughs)

AW: That's alright.

AW: This is going to go back toward your education, how you told us that about the university you went to. So, you did go to a university?

JM: Mhm.

AW: We did answer that question, but can you tell me the names of the programs you participated in?"

JM: Yeah, so I went to a university called Crown College. It was a very small university. I majored in music performance, well in music, emphasis on vocal performance. And it was also a Bible college or a Christian college, so I double majored in Christian studies as well. A lot of studies, was that the question, like studies and programs? So, I did a lot of intercultural work which I had a strong passion for. I was also in a leadership cohort which is also what they had

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there. They had a scholarship you could apply for, if you had like leadership potential. So, I did that for the four years that I was there. I did a lot of leadership programs that within that cohort as well. And, of course, with all the stuff on top of that, that being music and, you know, being part of every choir there and bands, as much music experience as I could get.

AW: Did you face any challenges during those four years in pursuing your education?

JM: As a person or as a woman?

AW: As a woman but also in general. Were there any challenges you faced?

JM: I mean I think college is hard for everybody. [Laughter] But so I don't know, everything from like the actual grades and knowing the material, to managing your time, you know becoming your own person. Nothing I don't think out of the ordinary.

AW: Thank you. And we're going to transition into your job. So, what was your first job?

JM: My first job? I loved my first job! My first job was at a grocery store in Colorado. I was, what do you call it? Not the cashier, I think I was just called a bagger. I bagged the groceries and pushed the carts. It wasn't really something glorifying, but I really liked it and I loved that I got to bike to work by myself, got to do my job, get my own paycheck. It was a good experience, I really enjoyed that job.

AW: What other jobs have you had? We know what job you have now, but led up to it?

JM: What job do you have down that I have now, just out of curiosity, to clarify things.

AW: That you are in charge of a nonprofit, you are a music teacher here (Worcester Music Academy), and that you still perform on your own.

JM: Yes, those three things K, good. I'm glad we're on the same page. (Laughs) I lose track because I wear too many hats. What jobs have I had is that the question? (Affirmative). I (was a) barista in college, I made coffee both on campus, and at a coffee shop off -campus which I enjoyed as well. After that, after I graduated. I moved back here, and worked at Guitar Center for three years? Two years? Two or Three years. I started at the bottom, where I was just the welcome person at the door basically. Then I moved to sales, into accessories, guitar accessories, and then I became the accessories manager. I really liked that job, I liked working at Guitar Center, aside from that can be kind of a man's world as well, and that has its frustrations. Aside from that, it had great perks, and I don't know, I think it gave me the opportunity to teach music, and bring me to where I am today. My first student--- I remember I was working, what else could I do for additional income? I guess I could teach music. I got my first student by meeting a customer at Guitar Center. That first student turned to many students, turned to here. I'm trying

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to think of what led me to nonprofit work. I guess that's too long of a question, so we'll move on. (Laughs)

AW: You kind of lead into it, how did you come to this job?

JM: Okay, so this is a question that makes me happy. So, yeah, it brings up good feelings. Having lived here, when I first moved here, you know working at Guitar Center, and being in a band doing music... I first started out as a musician in Worcester, I was also at the time attending the Wochurch (World Outreach Church), which at the time met at Pollen Congregational but now they meet at the Main South CDC [Community Development Center]. I made a lot of artist friends there as well. I was friends with a lot of different artists that live in the Main South community, and we somehow wanted to pool our talents and we all had a passion for the art we did. But we also had a passion for working with youth. For me, that passion started in college. I never thought I enjoyed work with kids before, never really thought about doing it. Then I did a charity project where we had to work with kids, and I suddenly realized that I really do enjoy working with kids. Anyways, all us artists in this community were like wow, we love what we do with our art and have a passion for it and are passionate about working with kids, how can we combine the two? We started brainstorming what could we do with that? There's something we can do with that, and we were like, "Why don't we make a free summer camp or something for like a community?" We were all living in the Main South at the time, or were at least working in the Main South at the time, so that was our community. And we noticed things that maybe could be improved, and noticed things that were lacking, and one of those things was lacking accessible art programs, and that is still lacking to this day. So, we kind of made a free program then kind of like rehab art. Why don't we make it accessible, we can do that. So, it was just like this experiment we tried, let's just try. It was just kind of an experiment that worked really well, we got a great response from the community. We tripled our number just after the first day, just from word of mouth. Kids told their cousins, their families, their friends, and people hear there's free childcare and get to do fun stuff, let's go, let's drop our kids off. Since that time, experiment grew to tradition, the tradition had grown to a full-blown nonprofit organization. It's something that not only did it work but we got addicted to, myself included, we need to keep doing this, something that gave us life, something that gave the community joy, no pun intended, [laughter], something that we couldn't not keep doing. We had to keep doing it, and me personally, it was something I had to keep doing, I couldn't stop, I wanted to keep doing it and I knew that we kept seeing potential. We can keep making this better, we can do this bigger, we can improve this and build on it. That building thing, just kept building on it more and more into what it is today.

AW: The next question kind of continues on with what you were just talking about. What has the job itself either the one here (Worcester Music Academy), the nonprofit, or the one where you still perform outside of work, what does it mean to you or what has it meant to you?

JM: Good question, I think I think about that a lot, too. They all give me a lot of meaning. I talk to most about Main Idea because I think that gives me the most meaning and purpose. I think as

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a person and kind of fills that, I don't know, just kind of fills that void for me. They all mean, you know, that I get to be part of the art culture and the music culture, in particular musical culture in Worcester and be part of like our community's music scene and our community's art scene and that is exciting, especially as we are in a renaissance, particularly an arts renaissance for the songs in Worcester. Then, you know, I think both this job, music school and Main Idea, you know it also means that I get to work with youth and be part of building that arts culture, you know, in the next generation which is really exciting.

(Pause, Joy Rochelle talks to her intern)

Anyway, same next generation and then in particular and also not just like the next generation, but I also get to be part of building something. They both mean that I get to be part of building something, something I think especially with Main Idea in particular, and why I talk most about that building something of great value and something really that I think that makes a mark on the world, you know, and that has a strong positive impact, you know, in an area of great--- you and for I don't know, yeah it's like it makes a really good positive impact. And that if there's one thing I want to get out of my life, it's to make a positive impact in the world where it counts. And so, I feel like you know Main Idea gives me an outlet to at least attempt to do that, to whatever degree I can possibly make it.

AW: This one also kind of plays off of it, what do you think the pros and cons of are to the path that you've chosen?

JM: Those are all the pros.

AW: Right.

JM: Cons are the cons that you have as any entrepreneur. Okay, I guess that's the kind of type work I do [laughter], and it's not for the faint of heart, it is really not. It takes patience, which is something I don't have. I don't think that I have to have some to do the work I'm doing, but it takes patience, it takes---you have to have self-confidence. You really have to keep believing in yourself, even when you're like, "I don't know how much I can keep giving," and you have to put your faith in yourself. You know, like you have to, no one else is doing this job for you, you are doing the job and whether or not it succeeds is not on anybody else but you. That's kind of nerve-racking I think. Also, it's I don't know it's--- what's the word I'm looking for? Endurance? Endurance maybe, it's like the closest thing I can think of--- I was like, you don't know when you start something, when you're an entrepreneur, you don't know how or when it's going to get the results, the ideal results, you want. You have to keep having faith, that is what you're doing matters and what you're doing is actually making a difference in your goal.

AW: So kind of like integrity? Staying true to who you are no matter what, like the direction it takes you?

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JM: Kind of, keeping doing something, even if you don't see results right away, I guess is more what I'm getting at. A lot of times you don't see results right away, you just kind of have to believe the results will indeed, in fact, someday will be there, and to give yourself credit along the way. Even if you're not like here's your goal, like if you're here, it's better than being here. [making hand gestures] You're here. That's awesome, but it doesn't mean that you're not here. Like it doesn't--- none of that matters because you're not doing your endpoint you know? I feel like, yeah, it takes a lot of faith, both in yourself, and in your dream, I think to be an entrepreneur and patience, if that makes sense.

AW: How do you feel about the choice you've made in your life? Do you have any regrets?

JM: I think everybody has regrets. I don't know any person who doesn't have regrets. That is like major regrets? No, I guess I'm really happy with the path I've chosen. You know even though it's the work I do, I really do feel is exhausting, exhausting much of the time and you know it takes 110 percent of your, if not more of, your effort, you know, and energy, and my force to do like I'm constantly exhausted as an entrepreneur. But at the same time, it invigorates me, and it is the only thing I can imagine doing to fill that void and to make me happy. It's like I live for the work, you know?

PR: Now we're going to do more of the politics and community involvement, but I think Main Idea, you kind of discussed a lot of programs or volunteer work against stuff like that you've done for the community. So the first question is, do you consider yourself actively active politically?

JM: I, you know, if you asked me that question a year ago or two years ago, I'd probably say no, but I feel like with Trump's presidency changed what the word now or politically involved means now. So, the answer to that question I think would be yes, if you mean by politically, you mean like contributing to the community, not just who has a certain seat of power but yeah.

PR: We'll expand on that. How did you feel watching this whole development with Trump coming in, into presidency and some of his actions or words that he said against women and against people with different backgrounds? How did those things make you feel?

JM: Well, clearly as someone who's Mexican, like it was, I mean, oh man like we could talk all day about this world event, this historical thing that happened. But I think his whole campaign and his ultimate election, you know, was difficult for as a woman you know, in regards to his misogyny and seeing someone get rewarded for that. Also, as someone who's Mexican and identifies as Mexican, at least in part, like you know I just felt like someone took a giant crap all over my ethnicity, like someone up, someone of people, a public figure, a very public figure, took a very massive crap on my ethnicity. And I felt like I saw a lot of people sweep that under the rug, and that didn't feel very nice. Even just, I mean everything I feel like really he really is

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not a person I would consider as a person of someone of integrity. And so, you know, everybody has blown up, but has their own options about political leaders, you know. And I feel like before Trump's presidency that there was this kind of, you know, common understanding that, you know, everyone has political opinions about at the end of the day like it's okay what you for you to think what you think and for me to think what I think and we're all not going to agree and that's fine. It's just politics like that's just fine. I feel like that changed everything. His presidency changed everything because it became less about--- it really drew a line in the sand. Like I feel for a lot of people, for most Americans, it drew a line in the sand of like how far are you willing to say something is okay, you know? I don't know, I feel like particularly people I work with in the Main Idea south community you know, I feel like, you know, being primarily low income--- there--- I don't know, maybe not primarily, but there's a strong immigrant and refugee community within the Main South community ,you know? It made me feel like my community was threatened as well as just like my identity, I guess that's the best word I can think of right now, like me as an individual, my personal identity as well as my community. I just felt--- and I think it woke a lot of people up. Maybe I feel threatened I guess is the word to use, as a person and then for my community.

PR: So, do you think that all the people here in the United States, would you say that we're separated now instead of being together, united?

JM: It's interesting because--- and maybe in some respects yes because that line was drawn. I feel like for a lot of people, but at the same time, people are tremendously more vocal now about uniting. People who feel like certain things were advertised as okay, things like racism, whether over or covert, things like misogyny whether they're over or forward... People are much more like resolved now. I don't know, I see unity now among people who felt like those things were maybe swept under the rug or taken for granted or trampled on, you know? I feel like I see a lot more people unifying and looking past other smaller differences, I guess for like this more prominent need, does that make sense?

PR: Yes. Now we're going to move on to health. How have health issues impacted your life and those in your family?

JM: These are very good questions. (Laughs)

PR: Would you like to pass?

JM: No, it's alright. Actually, can I pause real quick to go tell my intern what to do, so she knows what she's doing, be right back.

Pause

JM: Interesting question because there are a lot of unique health issues in my family. Maybe not

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so unique because there is a lot of people out in the world. But, (pause) my sister is a diabetic type one, not two, so she was diagnosed when she was two years- old. And so, I grew up with a diabetic sister. My grandma was also diabetic, it's genetic obviously. I was thinking, "Man if I have a diabetic kid, like it's supposed to skip a generation, but we will see. I think that was really hard for my parents, just like learning to adjust to all the needs that come with that but, I don't know, so I had a diabetic sister. She uses a pump now, but she didn't when growing up. So, there'd be a lot of instances when we would have to go to the hospital, or go trying to adjust to her insulin and I think there is a lot more technological--- I think diabetics have it better now than when they did, you know, 30 years ago. Anyways, moving on, my mom was also born with a spine defect, a birth defect in her spine called Cerindol Marilia. It's a--- you don't really know how it will affect the child until after, I think, they are born. But they called my mom a miracle baby, because she wasn't supposed to be okay. But she was--- there was a high chance of her not being okay, but she was so... (Mumbles-can't understand). She has nerve damage; her hands can't extend all the way. She has had multiple spine injuries. And then, for most of my teens--- growing up my mom was not as mobile I think as any other person. Except that the older I got, she got to the point where she couldn't drive anymore, because she couldn't feel a lot of nerve sensations in her foot, and so she didn't feel safe driving. And, so, she didn't drive, my dad was the one that drove. And so now I got my license, and now I get to drive. (Laughs). These past two years---interesting questions because these past years I actually moved back home to live with my parents because my mom's health was deteriorating quite a bit. While she has had all these surgeries on her spine and has been pretty mobile most her life, these past two years her health has kind of taken a big hit. It's--- we are still kind of in the middle of figuring it out, why it has gotten so difficult, and why her spine condition all of a sudden making her more and more immobile. But she has chronic pain, and chronic nerve damage, and we are trying, or we've been trying, to find the best healthcare for her for the last two years, and it's been quite a roller coaster. So, anyways, I lived at home to try to help my dad take care of my mom until now they are finally in a position--- he has a job now that is in a better location for them to tend different needs more--- and for him to better care for her. So, that is how health has affected our family. I had to live back home again, and my dad has a different job now, and all of us have to live differently. It's been an adjustment. We had to--- there have been so many needs and adjustments that even just trying to figure out and diagnose her what it is that's causing it and how to fix it. The health care system, in my personal opinion, is a joke. Trying to get that set up and trying to navigate health insurance is just like a whole other can of worms. Kind of a loaded question, huh?

PR: Okay, so now we are reaching the conclusion. Based on your life experiences what advice would you give women today and future generations?

JM: I try to give myself this advice every day. That is, don't ever let fear be the reason you don't do something, go for something. If that's the reason, do it anyways. And two, try to pace yourself. Try to be gracious with yourself and others.

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PR: What are your thoughts on feminism?

JM: Well we don't have all day. (Laughs).

PR: Do you consider yourself one?

JM: I do. I never did, I really haven't until recent years. I used to think feminist and feminism was a little overbearing, and it turned me off a lot. And then the more that I became aware of just a lot of injustices towards women that becomes normal, becomes socially acceptable, and kind of social normalization, the more I started to consider myself a feminist. I think feminism should be more sectional. I think sometimes it gets stuck (on a specific area). It should be intersectional. No matter what.

AW: Have you ever struggled both in your life and professional life based on your gender? It is a loaded question so if you don't feel comfortable answering it, you don't have to.

JM: No, it's alright I am just trying to think because I didn't used to. When I didn't think that feminism was necessary, because I used to think it was overbearing... I used to think I am a woman and I haven't run into any, you know... My personality is type A, so I am very self-assured, self-confident, that's how I operate. I am very straightforward so with that personality I've been in a lot of groups and work experiences where the majority of the work people are men. And even entrepreneurial work is, up until recently because of the whole renaissance thing, I think I have gotten used to working alongside men. And I think even my interest as a kid growing up not always what social society would consider feminine. Or like--- I'm trying to think of something. I like, I used to listen to hard core music growing up. I liked break dancing that was mostly guys. I think, yes, I might have gone through some experiences that I was unaware of at the time. But nothing in specific, besides like again what I said working at Guitar Center, I loved my job there. It's just when you work in a work environment that is--- I was the only female manager there, I was the only girl there, besides the girl working at the door. And it was mostly male customers. It was pretty male dominated job that I was in. With that comes a certain culture. (cuts off). It was more of the customers. There was a lot of sexual harassment from the customers that I endured, which I think it's the only specific example I can think of. But I'd like to think that I don't let--- I was never about to let the fact that someone thought I was less capable to do something as a woman to get in the way of what I wanted. I've always kind of made sure that if I wanted something, this would not be something that would get in the way. Sometimes I suppose it's out of your control, and I feel like I'm fortunate enough in my life that it's never been a case for me.

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