

Interviewee: Stacy OBey
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Abstract: Stacy OBey was born in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1978 and now resides in Rutland, Massachusetts. She grew up with a family that consisted of her parents, an older brother, and herself. Her family was very close and supported Stacy when she was debating what career path to follow. Her mother instilled the idea in her mind that whatever career a person chooses in life should be based upon what she truly loves. Her father is the fire chief in her hometown, and her mother stayed at home to raise Stacy and her older brother. She pursued an education where she majored in Horticulture. She received both her undergraduate and master's degree at the University of Maine. Even though her major is dominated by men, upon graduation Stacy had many job opportunities and she chose to move back home, where she held a position as the landscape designer at Shrewsbury Nursery. She currently works at the Norte Dame Health Care Center in Worcester. She takes care of the outside grounds and makes sure all her residents enjoy their living space which she decorates with colorful flowers and plants. Stacy also focuses on how her family, her daughter, and traditional gender roles have influenced and impacted her life thus far.

ET: Why hello.

SO: Hello.

ET: So your name is Mrs. Obey

SO: Yup.

ET: And what is your full maiden name?

SO: My full maiden name?

ET: Yes.

SO: Stacy Louise Rucholo

ET: Okay. And have you been married?

SO: How long or have I?

ET: Have you?

SO: Yes. Five years.

ET: Alright and where were you born?

SO: Worcester, Massachusetts.

ET: Okay. And do you have any children?

SO: Yes.

ET: How many?

SO: One.

ET: You said you just had your child.

SO: Yes, she is eight months old.

ET: That's so exciting!

JM: How has becoming a mother recently influenced or changed your life?

SO: How hasn't it? [laughs] It's a whole new world. When they tell you that you don't understand what it's all about until you have your own, is like the biggest cliché of parenthood and it's totally true. You feel like your heart froze and it's just an incredible experience.

ET: Exciting. What cultural ethnic background do you identify with, you or your family.

SO: My dad's grandparents were Lithuanian and Polish and my mom's grandparents were Scottish and Finnish so...

ET: Has that played like an influence on your life at all?

SO: Not really, no. We weren't big into, yah know, the occasional Polish food and my grandmother went to Finland to visit relatives and spoke Finnish, but we never got into any of that stuff.

JM: Tell us a little bit about your parents.

SO: My parents, let's see. My dad is the fire chief in my hometown, and that's like his life. He's dedicated yah know, his all. Cause I was born I think, and he was pretty young when he became a fire chief and he just loves it. He's very passionate about it and my mom is, stayed at home with us, moved to, from California when she was 18 and married my dad. And couple years later had my brother and I. And she stayed at home which was nice. And right now she's taking care of my daughter two days week, totally thrilled about it and just loving being a grandmother.

ET: So where did you live when you grew up?

SO: I grew up in Rutland [Massachusetts]

ET: Rutland?

SO: [agreeing].

JM: What was your neighborhood like generally?

SO: We lived right in the center of town so my dad could be close to the fire station [laughs]. So, it was, you know, it wasn't like a neighborhood now, like, big developments. And it was like Main Street USA kind of. The store was right up the street and we lived across from the post office and so it wasn't, not too many kids around but you know, down the street we had neighbors and things like that so.

JM: Do you think growing up in this neighborhood impacted your life negatively or positively in any way?

SO: It was a positive impact. You know, we grew up when you could do whatever you want in the neighborhood. And your mom would just yell out the back door that it was time for dinner or whatever. So we felt safe and was kind of near everything, so I think it was a good place to grow up.

ET: If you weren't born in Worcester, where did you, when did you arrive in Worcester what year, what age, and how did you come to live in Worcester?

SO: I don't live, I was just born in Worcester, I grew up in Rutland so.

ET: Oh, okay. And where do you live in the city now, how have you, lived in many areas or just strictly Rutland?

SO: I lived, grew up my whole life in Rutland and then I moved to Maine for six years when I was in college.

ET: How was Maine?

SO: Loved it.

ET: Was it a huge transition into a different..

SO: No. It was kind of the same small town. Orono [Maine] is just north of Bangor [Maine] So. Even Bangor is a small city and then Orono is just a small college town, kind of pretty similar to Rutland.

JM: Did you go to school up there?

SO: Yup. College. Yup

JM: What challenges do you think that Worcester the city still faces? What would you change about the city?

SO: What would I change- I don't, not living in Worcester, I don't really know what changes should be made.

ET: Do you think there has been any changes since you've been around the area?

SO: Yeah, it seems that they are cleaning up areas you know like Shrewsbury Street and downtown. Going to downtown now where the DCU is—is so different now than when we were young.

ET: How was it when you were young?

SO: It just, well the mall there was open there for awhile, and we just didn't go into that area that much. There was nothing to go to. Hopefully they are gonna start changing that around.

ET: Yah, there is a lot of restaurants down there and the DCU Center is very popular.

JM: You can apply this to your hometown too, but what do you think that women's experience in Worcester has been like generally?

SO: I would say that being my age, in Rutland I mean, it was it was always in my family, my mom especially was always, "you can do whatever you want to do." I would come home from school and be like, I'm going to truck driving school and I would get my (WHAT527) and my mom would be like, "That's fine honey, you can do whatever you want." So I think the, you know, I haven't seen personally, any road blocks as far as being a woman. Especially, I work in a male dominated field too, and I don't really see. I haven't had any difficulties.

ET: So you went to Maine for school, what did you pursue for your education programs?

SO: I, I have an undergraduate degree in Landscape Horticulture from the University of Maine and Masters Degree in Horticulture.

ET: Okay. And how did you transition into this position?

SO: I came home from, when I finished graduate school, I moved home cause I just had enough of being away, ended up doing some landscape design work on my own. Ya know, had my own little business. And I used to work at Shrewsbury Nursery on Route 9, doing landscape design. And eventually one day I met my current boss here, and we got to talking. And she said that they were looking to create a new position to manage all the grounds here. So I sent my resume in and here we are, five years later.

JM: Did you attend graduate school in Maine too?

SO: Yes.

JM: Where did you go?

SO: The same school, I stayed at the University of Maine.

JM: Did you have any challenges (WHAT658) that applied to you in your education? What challenges did you face?

SO: No. I would have to say that school, college was, it was a great time, a lot of fun. You learn so much being away and growing up, you know. You learn probably as much from the people you meet and the classes you go to. You kind of like real life and schooling, so you're learning your vocation, but also you're learning a lot about being independent. So I had a great college experience and graduate school and..

ET: Did you grow up knowing that that was going to be your like main pursuit?

SO: No. No I took Horticulture on a whim. I went to an open house at the University of Maine and I picked up a brochure and I was like, "Do they pay people to do that?" [laughing]. My mom and I drove up early one morning and she was like, "Let's just go look." And they had an open house so...And it's like a four and a half hours from here. So we got in the car and we went and I'll never forget picking up that brochure. And I was like, "Really? People get paid to do this? Like for real?" And my mom said, "You, you know..."

ET: So that was the first time you ever thought about it?

SO: Yeah, yup.

ET: That's awesome.

SO: I know I wanted to work outside. I have always been an outdoor kind of person. But until I picked that up and was like of wow, this should be interesting... I started in Horticulture and stayed through the whole--- I never switched majors or anything.

ET: So when you graduated, was there many options for you, like did you know...

SO: Yeah. I mean back then the economy was different. So there was a lot more stuff going on, and with horticulture, there's research, and there's greenhouse work, and landscape work. You know all those different things. I was actually offered a job with the Department, it would have been, the Department of Agriculture at the time. But was to become the Department of Homeland Security, searching cargo and luggage at Logan Airport. So I mean, it's just so many things that you can apply with a Horticulture degree. So I didn't, there was all those different, and you know wherever you want to go too, you know, you can move down south, you can move to California, move overseas.

ET: Were you excited to come back home?

SO: Was I excited to?

ET: Did you decide to right after?

SO: I decided to come, yeah, yup.

JM: Do you think that your college experience would have been different if you had stayed closer to home versus if you, when you did go to Maine?

SO: Well like, horticulture--what I studied was--I could have gone to UMASS, but I think that going to Maine was a different set of people and a different set of opportunities, so I am sure I could have done something similar at UMASS. But, the way that things progressed for me with my internships and stuff like that was just..

ET: How it played out kind of?

SO: Yeah, I think that it was just better for me in the long run that I went to the University of Maine so...

ET: Were there any support networks to guide you through, like a package or did you kind of do it yourself?

SO: No I just kind of went for it. You know, it was heavy in horticulture right away. We didn't do a lot of gen. eds. in the beginning so, you know, we started out with plant

material and horticulture classes, which was nice too because a lot of people I knew didn't know what their major was and didn't know what they wanted to do and you get right into it with horticulture.

ET: And they set you up on like a strict path of the courses?

SO: Yeah, you had, you could take concentration, so you could take like a designer, if you thought you wanted to own your own business. You could have a business concentration, or I think there was one other like green house management, or something like that, I can't remember what it was. But yeah, we had an academic adviser and a woman who just helped students make sure they got the right classes and stuff like that so it was easy, I thought.

ET: And when did you begin working and what did you do, was it your first job after college?

SO: No, I first started out working for myself, I had my own little business and then I was a landscape designer at Shrewsbury Nursery.

ET: How was running your own business, did you like that?

SO: I didn't, no. It was not for me, I just found it really hard. When you're dealing with live plant material, you plant something in the ground. It needs to get taken care of. And you have people who don't take care of it, and they call you back and say their plants died. And you say you're supposed to water them, so you know, it was that kind of frustration. And when you're that passionate about something, you try to provide someone with a nice front yard or a nice garden and they don't take care of it, it's like, why wouldn't you take care of it? They needed your help! So, yeah that was not my thing.

ET: So then you went straight to here?

SO: Shrewsbury Nursery, well I kind of, well Shrewsbury Nursery I worked part-time then full-time and still kind of did my own stuff, but then I came here full-time and this is all I do now.

ET: Do you want to describe what you do here?

SO: Sure. In the spring, I guess I'll start in the spring because it's different every season. So in the spring we get all the gardens cleaned up, get all the leaves from the previous winter cleaned up, and sweep the parking lot and just basically just anything that involves cleaning the outdoors. We get that done, then we start usually in the spring divide plants. So I'll do a lot of garden maintenance things like that. And then the bulbs come up, so we start dead heading and taking care of those, fertilizing, and then we start mowing the lawn, lawn care kind of things. We also---my job also---we take care of some things

inside like the decorating, and making sure the wreaths and things like that are seasonal for our residents, center pieces, and time they need flower arrangements, those kind of things I take care of. And then we plant annuals. I'll go to the nursery and buy plant material and take care of water, window boxes, pots, you name it. All those kind of things. And through the summer we basically just maintain the garden, maintain the annuals, and do a lot of mowing and trimming. General outside neat clean kind of things, trash, you know, a lot of trash around, cleaning up things like that. And then into the fall, we do... You know leaves start coming down so we start taking care of the leaves, getting the garden, you know taking the annuals out, getting the mums in, and then the mums come out and the bulbs go in. You know, the seasonal plantings, the leaves, a lot of leaves, and then once we get a good frost, we cut the garden for the winter. And over the winter I do a lot of inside stuff, projects, some snow removal, the maintenance guys do most of the snow removal stuff, thankfully so. They take care of that, and then it's Christmas decorations...

ET: Must be the funnest time.

SO: Yeah, we'll--- I think it's kind of fun but the guys don't [laughing]. We put trees up in the courtyard. We put wreaths on all the lampposts. You know, we try to get as much stuff out so it's festive for our residents. So that takes a lot of time in November and December. And then after the holidays, January February a lot of planning for the next year, ordering seeds, looking at new plants, see what you want. See what areas you want to work on, getting work list together and then April comes, late March, April, and we are out sweeping the parking lots again.

ET: Does it change during the past years, I don't know how to put it in words, have different things influenced you, have you changed the plants you use?

SO: Yeah, when I first came here I thought that it should just look good and what can I do to make it look nice. And then you try to realize what the residents like, and what they remember from their gardens. So, they like bright colors and they might have failing eyesight or hearing, so you kind of try to plan for different senses too. You always want to plan so that something is always flowering, so you kind of start catering towards what the residents like too.

ET: Do you work with the residents?

SO: I don't, no not too too much. I mean I know a lot of them because I am outside talking to them a lot but, down below they, in the long-term care building, they have some limited function wise. And then in the assisted living, they are trying to do the vegetable garden next year so that will be exciting for the residents. One of the girls in activities is going to work on it. So we are going to have, hopefully, a little vegetable garden with the residents. I got to introduce those things gradually because there is always so much stuff going on and it's hard to add things.

JM: What do you think the most enjoyable part of your job is, and the least enjoyable part?

SO: My most enjoyable part is going to the nursery and picking out the plants. It always seeing what is new and kind of seeing in your mind, figuring out what is going to look good together, and how it is going to grow and that is a lot of fun for me. I am a plant person, so if I could just be out in my garden all day, that would just be ideal. But the worst I would say is cleaning up after people. And, like we have a lot of birds, so it's always birds and trash—and just messy, like I don't- the messy things are just not pleasant, so...

JM: At your home do you share most of the primary responsibilities in terms of like housework and cleaning, or do you split that with anyone?

SO: Housework, cleaning – yeah I have a cleaning lady so I split- gladly split that with her [laughs]. My husband is excellent at the outdoor things. He loves gardening, so he takes care of the lawn and the gardens and all that kind of stuff. And then yeah, I really believe that if there's something that you hate doing, you know, we have a wonderful woman who comes, you know, and it's the best fifty dollars I spend every other week. She comes in and takes care of all that stuff so we can spend more time with our daughter, and do the things that we like. I like decorating my house. I don't necessarily like vacuuming it, so you know, that's kinda how we run--- we run things which works out pretty good. But my husband cooks, so we take turns doing that, you know it's pretty-- I would say pretty even in that kind of regard cause I have to do all the shopping so we don't go bankrupt [laughs].

JM: [laughs] All junk food

SO: [laughs] Yeah, exactly. He'd come home with like, you know, the BJ's packs of French fries and pizza rolls, so...

ET: How would you characterize the personal and professional costs of your chosen path, and how about the benefits?

SO: I- I couldn't be any more fortunate to do what I do, and to work here, it's just... You know I have such a low stress level, you know people appreciate... I went on a job interview once and the guy told me that people always--- it was for sales and it was for like indoor plants--- and he goes, "You know, you don't have too much of a problem because people always like to see the plant person." And that's kind of the way I look at it. People always appreciate what you do because they can go outside, and relax, and look at the beautiful things that are around. So like I said, I can't be any luckier to do what I do, to be here, especially on this property, and to be able to pursue some of those things that I love, like you know, making wreaths, and decorating, and you know, those kinds of

aesthetic things that--- it's a lot of fun. So, I have absolutely no complaints, whatsoever.

ET: That's awesome.

SO: Yeah.

JM: Have you ever experienced any major setbacks in your career?

SO: No. No, you know [laughs.]

ET: That's awesome.

SO: It's strange to say, you know, like you see--- even my husband was laid off a couple of years ago and found a job, a job again right away--- but you don't--- I mean I've never had that experience so I don't know what that's like. I mean, it was--- when I first came back--- I mean it wasn't easy, you know? I mean I wanted to find like a full- time job, but there was nothing out there that I loved right away. You know, it was either a long commute, or the pay wasn't great, or you know--- so I was fortunate where I could kind of dabble in a few different things for a while, so you know, there wasn't that pressure of, you know a big mortgage and a kid and all that kind of stuff. And once I got here, I took on those other things. And, kinda--- maybe we did it backwards--- we waited a little while longer to have a baby, and so we were set-up for it rather than...

ET and JM: Yeah.

SO: You know, the other way around.

ET: So you had a concrete setup and then you worked off of it?

SO: Right, right.

JM: What type of work does your husband do?

SO: He's in sales, so he's out on the road all day which is good for him because he wouldn't function like indoors all day. He likes being out and talking to people and stuff like that, so...

ET: How did him getting laid off, like influence or impact your family life? Did that have a large impact, or...

SO: It did, you know, we--- my husband is very good with bills, you know, like he's very in tune with what our finances are. So we were at a point where, you know, he had a severance and we had planned out and we had saved. So it's like, you know, take a month off, or take two months off and just find what you really wanna do. Or--- you know, so he

found a job and tried it for a couple months--- or a couple--- I don't even know how long it was cause I don't like that. So you know, we were fortunate---- and again, but at that time we didn't have our daughter either...

ET: Exactly.

SO: And my job, you know, can carry a lot of the weight and as far as our household finances, so it wasn't a major thing for us. We were fortunate.

JM: Yeah.

ET: Do you consider yourself active politically, at all?

SO: No.

ET: Not at all?

SO: Nope.

ET: Have you been involved in any volunteer or community work whatsoever?

SO: Hmm- volunteer or community work? Not recently. I used to volunteer with the Girl Scouts in town but I just haven't had recently haven't had time to do that, so...

ET: Why did you choose the Girl Scouts? Just...

SO: I was in Girl Scouts my whole life, so it was... I was asked when I got back from school to get involved again, and I did for a little while. So--- and it was fun but I just, like I've said, I haven't had the time to commit.

JM: Do you think when your daughter gets a little older that might be something you, like do with her?

SO: Probably, yeah. Yeah.

ET: That's exciting.

SO: Yeah.

ET: Has religion played any role in your life?

SO: No, we don't--- you know my parents weren't incredibly religious, so you know--- and we never really went to church, so it's kind of --- we've just--- and my husband was the same way--- so we just, you know, we don't have a church. We don't, you know, we

don't go, so.

JM: Have health issues impacted your life or those in your family?

SO: Health issues, hmm. I had a couple uncles pass away pretty young- you know, in their late 50's early 60's, so I try to be careful about --- because diabetes runs in the family. So I guess that's kind of an impact. It kind of keeps us eating healthier and being a little more active, but aside from that we haven't had any major health issues.

JM: It seems like your job in itself is pretty active- like you would be outside...

SO: Active, yeah- always on our feet, always on the go. So yeah, again we're fortunate. [Laughs].

ET: [Laughs]. What are your experiences in accessing quality and affordable healthcare?

SO: Quality affordable health care, oh gosh. We have quality healthcare, it just worries me that it's becoming not affordable...

ET: Yeah.

SO: You know, it's getting to a point where you're just ---when you think of how much money I pay out every week--- and my husband and I are healthy. You know we go to the doctor once a year, and we pay, and pay, and pay, you know.

JM: And now with your daughter, too...

SO: And my daughter is healthy, and you fight to keep her healthy, you know. Like I make all of her food, you know. We did the breast feeding and all those things that are right and good, and you feel like no matter how much you do, and no matter how healthy you stay you just keep paying more.

ET: More, and more.

SO: And more--- and you're like why, you know? And it's crazy. It's really crazy.

ET: Do you plan on having more children?

SO: I don't yet, we don't know yet. Yeah we're not sure if--- There's a resident next door who has eight daughters and every day she says, "Are you gonna have eight like me?" And I say, "Well if they were eight just like my daughter, Leigh, then I would be fine." She was a sleeper, she was good, she was happy, but everyone's always like, "You know, the next one could be a beast," so [laughs], you know, you're like...

JM: I was a pain when I was little.

SO: [laughs] So we'll see.

ET: Based on your life experiences what advice would you give to women of today, and future generations in any aspect of life?

SO: Just do what you want to do, you know, don't--- I have cousins whose father told them that they had to go to business school, and that they had to get a business degree. And that's not gonna make you happy. You need to find your passion, and you know-- like they say, you know, "If you love what you do you never work a day in your life." So you know, more people would say to me you know horticulture? What is horticulture? What are you gonna do with yourself? And for me it's been the most fortunate. For as different as a choice that it was, it's been the most fortunate decision. Because now I'm in a niche where like--- you know, the way we that take care of this property impacts the people's perception of it. So that the better it looks, the better the place looks, you know, the better off we are, so...

ET: So you find like an enjoyment in making people like the environment, sort of thing?

SO: Yeah, yeah. You know, it just feels like home when they come here, you know. It's not like other institutional kind of places, and it's set up like that. I mean it was built--- especially next door--- was built for courtyards and outdoors, that's gonna be a big thing coming up in healthcare too--- was like the outdoor, like taking care of the whole patient kind of thing. So I think you just need to find--- you know- I had an intern a couple years ago who wanted to be a landscape architect because the starting salary was 60,000 dollars. But he didn't know what a landscape architect did. [Laughs] So you can't base, you can't base what you pursue in life off of what you think your salary is gonna be, I think, I mean personally.

JM: Even when we came in, with like the appearance of the building itself, all of the signs, the red brick, everything was like really nice. And I've been to other places where it just looks like it's...

ET: Scary.

SO: Yeah, and it helps you know, and it makes people want to come here and live, which is...

ET: Which is a big decision in life.

SO: Which is a huge decision for them, and critical for us, you know so, yeah it's...

JM: How do you get through tough times? Like what kinds of thoughts do you have to

keep yourself going?

SO: Now I think when I have tough times obviously I think of my daughter. I also think of people who are a lot less fortunate than I am, and I always keep that in perspective with how lucky that I am, you know that my husband and I have a job, and that I have a job that's ideal, you know, and I don't have a lot of that stress, or you know the huge bills, so I just try to keep things in perspective as far as what really is. I had a roommate who always used to say, "Think about what your problem is right now, and think about if it's going to matter in five years or not, and if it's not going to matter to you in five years then just..."

JM: Let it go.

SO: Let it go, and that helps a lot you know, so you just, I think, have to keep it in perspective that way.

ET: Do you think that success has changed throughout your life? Since like before you went to school, going to school, and picking out a career? Do you think that defining success changed at all?

SO: Defining success...

ET: Like growing up did you have one perspective of what success was? And then like going through school and meeting a husband. Did all that change, or was it always pretty persistent?

SO: I've always had--- I don't know how to describe it--- I guess I never really had those goals of like--- I knew I was gonna go to college, and finish school, but I never had that goal of meeting a husband, having a family and you know that kind of thing. So, for me it just kind of came, and I just kind of went with the flow and took things as they came. When we got married, we didn't really plan on having kids, so there was no pressure there as far as success. I know a lot of people are really passionate about having a family, and we were just kind of like whatever. You know we're gonna just be happy and kind of live our life and then, you know, recently decided to have kids--- so I guess success--- I never really had those kind of goals so I just figured, I just got a masters degree and I'm feeling pretty good about myself, so you know...

ET: Congratulations!

SO: Thank you. So as things happen I guess I find myself--- I feel successful now, but I don't think it was ever---it was never a money based for me, it was never about things. I'm not into being---I'm not into material things, so I think for me success was more like a happiness thing and being content, you know?

JM: I know you mentioned before that your mom helps out with your daughter. Have you had a hard time balancing being a new mom and your career?

SO: No, it's been actually pretty easy [laughs]...

ET: Lucky you!

SO: I know! My mom takes her twice a week, my mother-in-law has her once a week, and we have a wonderful babysitter on Thursdays, so... And I have Friday's off. I work 32 hours, so I'm sure it will get more challenging when she's in school. And who's gonna wait with her to get on the bus, and where's she gonna go when she gets out of school because she's gonna be in Rutland, and you know, I'm in Worcester so how am I gonna get her when she doesn't go to school until nine and gotta be home by three thirty? And I think it will become challenging, but right now she's pretty mobile, you know. You just put her in the car seat and she'll fall asleep and take a nap. And my husband brings her in the morning, I pick her up. So right now, it hasn't really been--- even when I came back from maternity leave--- what I did was I came back, for a couple weeks. I came back two days a week, and then I came back three days a week for a couple weeks, and then I came back four. So I kind of like built back into it. And I got used to the process that way and it really, you know--- would I want to be home with her? Probably, you know--- I always joke around that I'd rather work like Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, you know, and have Mondays and Fridays. But you know, aside from that it hasn't been--- so far it hasn't been, you know too, too bad.

JM: Have you thought about what you're going to do when she gets a little bit older? Or are you going to just kind of take it as it comes?

SO: Just take it as it comes, you know? My husband wants to plan out what we're going to do when she's in kindergarten. And I'm like, "She's eight months old." Three years, four years, five years from now, you know, maybe like--- I have an aunt I'm very close with, and maybe she'll come and stay with her until she gets on the bus and then she'll go to my mom's after school. So you know, so you can't--- or I find that I can't---my husband's a planner though, so he likes to know these types of things.

JM: It's good that you have family so close. I grew up with my grandparents down the street, so it was nice to have them. They like helped raise me too.

SO: Yeah, yeah! Like my mom is in town, and my dad works in town. He comes over and hangs out with her at lunch, and you know, we have relatives around. And my in-laws are in the next town over, so we in that regard are just very fortunate.

ET: Where do you see yourself in like 20 years? Still here?

SO: Yeah, hopefully still here [laughs]. I can always say when I walk by people and I can

hear them and they're with their family member or someone and they're like, "That's the girl that does the gardening." And I'm like, "In 20 years am I still going to be the girl that does the gardening?"

ET: That's funny!

SO: So like, I'm 32 and I'm still the "girl that does the gardening" which is fine. I always joke that they're going to have to--- I'll be out there picking up trash with my cane.

ET: [laughs] Have you ever thought about any time when you're going to be retiring, whatsoever? Do you think ahead and...

SO: Retirement. You dream about retirement- you think, who's going to leave me a couple like hundred thousand so I can pay my house off and I can retire? [laughs]. Yeah, you always dream of that.

JM: And pay for college for your daughter.

SO: Yeah, exactly! My husband and I joke because I paid for myself---You know I paid for my college on my own. And my husband always says when people ask him if he's saving for college yet, he says, "My wife paid for it herself, she can pay for it herself too!" [laughs] That's kind of funny, but yeah, you always think, oh my gosh, yeah what would I do? But I have so many hobbies too that I don't think I would have a hard time being retired, you know? Like between the gardening and I like to sew, and you know things like that, but you know it's awhile off.

ET: Yeah.

SO: You know, I'd be more likely to work part-time, maybe than retire. You know ease down into it...

ET: What are some of your other hobbies?

SO: I like sewing, rug hooking. My husband says I'm like an 80 year old woman [laughs]. I like paper--- you know paper crafts, you know anything with glue and glitter and all that kind of stuff.

ET: You're lucky you have a daughter!

SO: Oh, I know! Thank God!

JM: It looked like you were doing some of that stuff before when we came in.

SO: Yeah, you know making the stencils [laughs]. And I used to love running and now

I'm finally doing that again after a year and a half. I was like so good, and then I got pregnant and my doctor recommended not running and I was like [sigh]...

ET: Do you think that based on your career, that being a female helped you in any sense? Did that play a role in any way?

JM: You said it's mostly male dominated...

SO: Yeah, yeah! Like it's funny... I got a piece of equipment delivered and it's funny the guy was showing it was like me. And then like three guys, and he was showing them how to use it. And he was like, "Who's going to be using this mostly?" and I was like, "Me, like over here!" So you know it's different, but I don't know--- with like other people in-- -like I think I was the only woman in the landscape design end of it, and the gardening end of it, so it's--- I don't really think there was too many challenges it was--- it's just different, you know? You think--- you know, you go to trade shows and it's 75% men, and you're looking at equipment and you know, it's just different I guess. And it's not in any way--- and you kind of have to make it that way too you know? You kind of have to look at it as what you do, and don't let anyone slow you down you know?

JM: Was it mostly men that you graduated with for that major? Or were there some women too?

SO: I would say, you know, at that time, I think there were 10 or 12 of us that graduated that year it was about half, half and half.

ET: Did everyone get jobs? In your class?

SO: I mean as far as I know, yeah. Pretty much, a lot of the guys do landscape construction work like a lot of stonewalls and patios and things like that. One of them was a golf course superintendant, and took care of a golf course, a couple work in greenhouses. And actually, one of my friends I graduated with decided to become an herbalist, and he's in school right now to become a homeopathic doctor, so yeah.

ET: Wow, so there's many paths you can take.

JM: It seems versatile.

ET: Is there anything else you would like to talk about? Think we covered it all?

SO: No, not that I can think of. I think we covered everything.

JM and ET: Well thank you very much!

SO: You're welcome!