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Interview with Laura Ruiz

Laura Ruiz

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Interviewee: Laura Ruiz

Interviewers: Ciara Banker and Shannon Rodriguez

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Overseen by: Dr. Chrissy Yee Lau

Bio: Laura Ruiz comes from an Indigenous background, her family are Zapotec from Southern Mexico. In college, Ruiz organized with MECHA and then later with Mujeres de Maiz in LA. She joined the Auntie Sewing Squad because it was a great opportunity to help while working from home with her two children. Her motivation is both for her own children and for the families across the nation who were most vulnerable to the pandemic. Ruiz is currently a science teacher and an artist and will use those skills first and foremost to serve the community she teaches in. Ruiz states her students inspire her to keep going.

Thematic Outline: Laura Ruiz discusses her Indigenous background and growing up in Gardena, how she got into sewing and how she views it as an art form (0:47-5:10). She then discusses her involvement in MECCHA and how she first joined the Auntie Sewing Squad (5:40-11:02). Ruiz explains how the pandemic has affected her Indigenous community, as well as how she grew up in a culture where every member of the community needs to give (11:14-20:20). She describes how she grew up in a very diverse setting, but after entering a magnet school and then college at UC Santa Cruz, she could see the glaring disparities in resources and preparation between white and Indigenous students (20:28-25:32). Wrapping up, Ruiz discusses how her participation in the UTLA teacher's strike and one piece of advice to her younger self: practice talking to people more (25:39-41:05).

Oral History Transcript

0:04 - 0:46

Shannon Rodriguez (SR): So today's Saturday, November 27th. My name is Shannon. This is my partner Ciara. And today we're going to be interviewing Laura, who is a part of the Auntie Sewing Squad. So yeah, let's get started. So I guess I could start with my question. I know in the spreadsheet that Professor Lau gave us, you gave us a brief description about yourself, but can you tell us more about your background and how you got into sewing?

0:47 - 5:10

Laura Ruiz (LR): Oh, okay. So my parents are from Southern Mexico. They are Zapotec. They came to the US as young adults. So like, in their 30s, I guess, not too young anyways. But they had known each other as small children, so they came here. Both of them learned English pretty quick, because Spanish was their second language. So I think they're really quick to pick up a third language. Then they had us, we were born and raised in Gardena, California. Me, my sister, and my brother. But they only spoke to us in English, so we didn't learn Spanish or Zapotec. So we all kind of had to teach ourselves as we grew up into adults to speak Spanish. That's just a little bit about my background. But my mom taught me to sew when I was a little girl in Gardena, so probably like around age, maybe nine or ten, she started sewing things for my dolls and stuff. Cause I love to play with dolls, love, love, love, Barbies, and dolls, any kind of dolls, baby dolls. I was just a big doll girl. Anyways, so she started sewing for me and then eventually I got the idea so I would start sewing by hand myself, and then she showed me how to use her sewing machine. So I'd say by like 13, I was sewing on the sewing machine and just loved it ever since. I'm pretty good with my hands, like pretty crafty. My dad's also an artist. So, my brother too, only my sister didn't get the genes. Me, my mom, my brother and my dad, we can all like build things or draw things or sew things, we just have this way. But my sister can't do any of that. So I've just always been, like, I tell my students, I'm a teacher, but I always tell my students, I'm an artist, I'm an artist. I just like to embrace it now. I never used to say that, but now I do, because I know that I can do things with my hands if I set my mind to it. So I've always made my daughter's Halloween costumes, I sewed my own wedding dress, just random things that I've done with sewing. And then when I got married and I had kids and my younger daughter was very hard to take care of, she has a lot of learning disabilities, so like wore on me. So pretty much all I did was family and teaching just all the time. That's all I did. And when I was in college or a young person, I did a lot of organizing and protesting and things like that. But after I had kids, all of that pretty much stopped because I just didn't have any spare time. So then when COVID hit, I don't remember, it was like a common friend that was friends with Kristina on Facebook. I don't remember, she posted something or she responded to something I said, and she said, "Oh, you could donate fabric to your local friend that's organizing mask making for at-risk

communities.” And I was like, who's that? And then I just signed up and I just kind of watched for two weeks or something before I was like well I'll sew something. I was still teaching online and still had my two girls here at home schooling online. So I only did like 30 masks a week. I wasn't like a mass sewer. I just worked on a regular machine, but I could figure out how to make the masks pretty quick by myself. They gave me patterns and stuff, but I quickly modified how I would sew them, but, they're pretty straightforward. Yeah. So that's what I started doing, 30 a week. I think I made like maybe 400 or 500. So not too many.

5:11 - 5:12

Ciara Banker (CB):That's quite a bit.

5:14 - 5:18

LR: I sew really fast. So even though I only did 30, I would do them like real quick.

5:20 - 5:39

CB: I definitely think too that sewing is kind of like an art form, so I think it's good for you to say that you're an artist. My question is, I saw that you were involved with MECHA in college and Mujeres De Maiz, can you tell us a little bit about that and your experience with these organizations?

5:40 - 8:05

LR: Oh yeah. It's MECHA, I don't know what it is now, but that's what it was when I was in. Okay, so our primary goal was to outreach to high school students. So we primarily would organize educational events on campus and try to bring busloads of kids to visit the campus and tour the campus and to learn more about the programs to support them when they were on campus. That was our big thing for the most part and then we just hang out and socialize and stuff, and just be in solidarity with the other groups and like the goals on campus and stuff. Yeah and then just by being together, I think a lot of it was retention stuff, but mostly it was organizing to reach out to high school students. I know there was other aspects like political and like we would go to national conferences or state conferences and there was a lot of dialogue about names and places and papers. I just don't pay attention to that. I'm really bad. I was just like, I'll do the dirty work. You want me to fill out like 20 excel sheets? You want me to make 30 calls to schools? You want me to guide a group of students? Like, I'll do all the grind, but I don't want to be involved with...It's kind of like with teaching, I don't want to be an administrator. I don't want to be a principal. I just want to be in charge of my classroom and do the hard stuff, but the stuff that's autonomous to me, so that was my thing. And then Mujeres De Maiz is in East LA here. It was events to celebrate and publications to celebrate the work of Indigenous women. And so I would just help with events a long time ago. I don't think I've done anything with them basically since I got married, so like 15 years or something. Yeah. So it was just a little bit of a meeting

and talking and supporting their work, but I try to go to their events and buy the ticket and stuff to support them as much as I can. I took my daughter once to one of their events too. And then whenever they have events, I try to buy from them too.

8:06 - 8:29

SR: Yeah. I think that's really cool. I had a MECHA program at my school too, and it was just very inclusive and like they made everyone feel comfortable and welcome. A question I have, you briefly said it and explained about it, but how, and why did you get into the Auntie Sewing Squad? Did you hear about it or research into it?

8:30 - 10:16

LR: I was just reading the post that my friend—it was just like one comment she posted about donating fabric to your friend, which she was referring to her friend. And I asked her, well, who are you talking about? What are you talking about? And then she put the link or something. So then I clicked on the link and I just read what was being posted and what she said, so then I requested to join or something. Then I just kind of was reading and reading what they had to say, reading what they were doing. I was like, okay, I can do this. This is good. I really love Kristina. I mean, she's amazing. So I think that was a big part of it, I felt like it would go somewhere. Cause you don't know if you can have confidence in your leaders, you just never know. But when I read what she wrote and the way she responded to anything I said, I was like, all right, okay, I can do this. She's very straightforward, very upfront, very direct. That's how I am. That's how my kids are. So it was like, okay, I can, like I'm good with this. This is good. I trust this leadership. I think this can work. And it did, she did an amazing job. Her partner at the time lived like just around the corner from me—So I met her early on because I would deliver stuff to them while they were there, like masks that I made or pick up things from them. So it was supplies and stuff. So I met her pretty quickly and her partner and yeah, that was that.

10:17 - 10:21

CB: Had you met her through Facebook or...?

10:21 - 11:02

LR: Just from clicking on her link and reading about her, that was the first time I'd ever heard of her. I'd never heard of her before that. From that friend who wrote something, I can't remember what she wrote either, but something about donating fabric to your friend who's sewing. I was like, well, I have a lot of fabric I could donate. Then I thought, well, and then I read, well I can sew that and I really like working with my hands and I don't always have the time. So I thought, oh, this would be a nice way to help the community to do something while I'm stuck at home and to use my skills and practice my skills.

11:04 - 11:11

CB: For sure. That's really cool. So being Indigenous, how did the pandemic affect you personally?

11:14 - 14:08

LR: Well, I don't know all of my relatives very well, but I know a lot more than my sister and brother because I went to live in the town my parents were born in when I was in college. So I met a lot of family and kind of understood my family tree and, just off the top of my head, like cousins, I could name 300, because it's so vast. But I know personally that I've met 10 family members of those 300 died from COVID and those are the only ones I know of. There's probably more that I don't know, like there's ones that my mom and my dad have named that I don't know who they are, but I know that there were more than I know and, and some very close relatives of mine as well. One of them died in the town next to my dad's house and it was his friend and it was tragic because everyone thought it was COVID and it's just scary because my father, my father retired and he lives there now where he was born and it's like a hundred elderly Indigenous people and they were all fearful that this man had brought [COVID]. It was a very irresponsible thing; my uncle had arrived from the U.S. and he was sick and no one wanted to help him because they didn't want to spread COVID in this very delicate and Indigenous village. It was just tragic so he died alone. Then my other uncle that lived near my dad, he killed himself because he was already going through a lot of trauma from other things that had going on in his life and I think he just reached a point where he was like, well, now's the time. And so he took his life and he was a dear friend of my father...and he took his life in that next house next to my father. So my father had to go through all that. I was here, but he was over there - he's still over there. So all that stuff was happening. And that was just my family, like there were other Indigenous people I know in LA whose families experienced the same thing and it was really scary. So I mean, I think it's really scary. It's scary. It's sad. But also, for me, it's like, I can't leave my kids, you know. I can't leave my kids, I gotta do everything I can to just stay alive. So that was always, always what I was thinking about.

CB: That's really hard. I'm so sorry about that.

14:09 - 14:27

SR: I'm sorry as well. And I feel like the pandemic was a tough time for everybody in different ways, which leads me to my next question, which was, were there any events that impacted you and inspired you to go out and help communities and many different families?

14:29 - 18:09

LR: Well I think, I don't know if you're familiar with like, communities from Oaxaca or I don't know how other communities work from other states, but in our community, there's a lot of

community fundraising events. So I grew up attending those all the time. It was like, we're going to another fundraiser. We're going to another fundraiser now. They didn't call it a fundraiser. I didn't realize it for years if that's what we were doing, but they would hold these events. Back then my dad owned a print shop for many years in Gardena and he had this big open back space in his business. He would let people hold their fundraisers there for really low, I don't know if he even charged many people. He might've not charged people but there's so many communities who would throw their fundraisers at my dad's shop, like he will throw parties all the time. And so anywhere I go, like in Oaxaca, not so much anymore, cause he hasn't done it in a long time cause he retired, but whenever I'd go anywhere and I mentioned my father's name, everybody knew him, even my grandfather too. Like some people would know and tell me stories about them, but they would always be like, "Oh your father is so-and-so your father." It was like royalty. I knew as a young person that he was always giving to the community or trying to help in his own way because he was never, he's also like me where he doesn't want to be involved in politics. He doesn't want to be involved in like the decision making necessarily. He gets put in those positions because he's trustworthy, but he doesn't want to, he just wants to do the dirty work. He's like, "I'll do the dirty work. I'll build the water tank, I'll organize the well making. I'll do those, but I don't want to be in charge of nothing." He was always willing to help. And that's just the nature of being part of that community. So you kind of have to, but I mean there's people that avoided of course. And I kind of do avoid it, I guess, cause I don't really go in that space anymore. But it's like an obligated thing. Like if you live in the community, you have to give to that community constantly in some way: labor, money, if you visit, and now that I'm older, my father has to remind me, he's like you came, you got to give something. I'm like, oh yeah, yeah, yeah. Sorry. Oh I'll write the check. Just tell me what, I don't mind. I just don't remember like all the rules, if you visit, do you have to give? How long do you have to visit for before you give, who do you give to? And I've always just given to my dad cause like he's, he knows all that stuff. So that's like the culture that I grew up in, it's like you have to give in some way, but it wasn't made explicit to me. It's just like, that's just how it is. But as an adult or an older person, I realized, oh, that's how it is. You have to give, you have to give your labor or you have to give money and I'm pretty bad at it mostly because I have my smaller daughter that it's like, I'm always worried about her. Like I can't just take her wherever. Then with COVID and stuff, I got sick. I don't know if I got COVID, I got some kind of illness that kind of set me back. So kind of been staying home most of the time, but yeah, I'm not sure at what point I realized this is how it is. You have to give, but that's the way I grew up. It's like you have to give to the community.

18:14 - 18:25

CB: With growing up did you ever grow up on a reservation or ever spend time on a reservation before? If so, what kind of impact did that have in your life?

18:26 - 20:20

LR: No, no. My parents—we grew up in Gardena, but they grew up in that small village and it's their land and they waged battles over their land in the past. They would tell us things like the village conflicts and stuff. So the lines have been drawn for years long. So, and they have a very tight grip on their resources and each town is very powerful in terms of how they control their own stuff. Now there's conflicts and water rights problems and things that go on, but the government doesn't really make any decisions for them in any way, shape or form. I mean, they support them, I suppose, but most decision making is in the village basis, village by village. Sometimes they'll come together and make decisions together, but I think for the most part it's individuals and I lived there as an adult. Like after college, I went to go live there for a year on and off and I just traveled throughout Mexico and stuff, but that was it. But I know that both of my parents were sent to boarding schools very young. My mom, when she was, I don't even know, but when my mom was sent to boarding school, she didn't know Spanish yet. So she struggled quite a bit because she didn't have shoes and she didn't speak Spanish. So she had to figure all that out while she was there. So she, I don't know, maybe she was like fifth grade or fourth grade, I don't really know at what age she got sent. My dad got to stay home. He was like the baby. So he got to stay home and he would just walk to school in the next village and I assume that's how he learned Spanish. So he didn't leave home until he was like 15 or something to go to school somewhere. But my mom left as a young person.

20:28 - 22:08

SR: Growing up what problems did you encounter with sexism and or racism, if so that they have the impact, a big impact in your life?

LR: Well, I mean, I was assaulted quite a bit in fifth grade by this little white kid. He was disabled and I was just so quiet. I was always fearful as a child, completely opposite of my kids, thankfully, but I was very quiet and shy and I just didn't say anything 'cause I was always afraid that I would get in trouble from my mom. My mom was kind of scary and so I was always afraid that anything that happened would always be my fault, and so I would never tell her. So he didn't do anything too drastic, but he always touched me all the time, constantly trying to touch me, touch me, touch me. So that was traumatic. And then my friend told me you got to go speak up, tell the teacher. So I didn't ever tell my mom, but I told the teacher and the teacher just humiliated me. It was this old Asian woman. And she just humiliated me in front of the class. She got us into a big circle and I was like, "What are we doing?" She made me stand in the middle and then she made him explain to the whole class why he behaved the way he did. I was like, what in the world is going on here? This is the worst thing you could ever do to someone. So it was a horrible, horrible experience, but my mom never knew. I told the story once in front of her as an adult, maybe like five years ago, and she was like, "What?" I was like, "Yeah..." Gardena is, I don't know if you're familiar, but it's a very racially mixed community. So it's got

an even number of Latino, white, Asian, different kinds like Japanese and Chinese and Vietnamese, they're all mixed in and mostly Mexican. Your white people thrown in here and there, so it was like an even mix. So it wasn't too, we just all grew up together. So we didn't have, I don't think I ever had any negative sentiments towards any other ethnicity and my best friend was white, or half white. So I never heard them say anything bad about us or anything. As a kid, it wasn't a big deal. Then high school and middle school was also mostly Latino and white and Black and Asian, so it was just always very mixed. I don't remember anything. Maybe in high school, 'cause I went to a magnet in San Pedro, which is mostly white and then I would end up, I tried to take a few honors or advanced and that's where I met more white people and stuff. And they weren't, no one ever said anything to me to my face or anything, but I could tell. I was like, wow, these kids are way better prepared than I am. And then when I got to, I went to UC Santa Cruz and when I got there, I realized, wow, like I was so underserved as a student. I didn't know how to read, write and do much of anything like that. But I was a hard worker so I just worked by myself until I got to where I needed to be with the reading and writing. Yeah, I don't think as a young person I really noticed anything. It wasn't until I went to college and realized how poorly prepared and understood we were. And then a lot of my peers dropped out the first year or they failed the second, the first or second year and they left. They just couldn't hang with being away from home, being away from mom, being away from their boyfriends and being in the environment that we were in. I don't know. I was always flexible. I've always been a flexible child and adult and so when it came time to decide to go to college, I was like I'm going to go far. I was just happy to leave. I'm not really close to my mom that way. I mean, I love my dad and I was closer to him, but my dad's still a traditional Mexican father, so I wasn't like "I'm going to stay with you." It wasn't like that, I'm ready to go. And then that's when I realized, oh, wow, I'm really underprepared. I was underserved. I was totally miseducated. It was pretty sad. And then I went to grad school and it was okay. I didn't really like it at all. It was just a weird environment.

25:39 - 25:55

CB: So how do you think social interaction will develop in this country after having been through such an extreme pandemic? And also how do you think it'll affect smaller communities such as where you grew up or like reservations?

25:56 - 29:54

LR: From what I've seen, I think it just has kicked people into action. They gotta be more organized and better prepared and make use of resources now with the internet and social media and stuff. There's a wealth of resources that I don't think we necessarily took advantage of before. That if you understand how it works, then you can really make it work for you. I think that what it's brought to a lot of the Indigenous communities in this country, at least, I don't know really too much about what's going on down there. I think it's still too scary, we're lucky here

because we have access to the vaccine, but the communities down there, they get a vaccine that's significantly less protective and I don't think they're getting boosters. I think it's just, it's still too scary to do anything really down there. I mean, it's like you open it up, but then something happens and you've got to close it back up. So like right now you can't just go. There's a lot of religious celebrations that happen in that village all the time and you just can't have them anymore. Or if you have them, you have to make sure it's all local people and you can't have people not from the area because the education about COVID is pretty, pretty poor, I think. It's just too risky to risk anybody right now. I don't know. Definitely different this year than they were last year, like socially. I teach eighth grade, they're the oldest group in the middle school. Typically they know not to grab each other or touch each other. Although that sounds weird, but that's what I tell them: "Stop touching each other." Cause they're just not, like it's little kids, they push and shove and grab each other and do random stuff like that. I don't usually see that in eighth grade or if I see it, it's just like one kid or two, and then I correct them and it's done. But this year, they're very grabby. I've seen people grab each other's behinds way too many times than I've ever seen, like, what are you doing? You don't touch people that way. You don't touch people in the privates, they just don't know that it's not okay to do that because it's something that little kids do, I guess. I'm like, you can't do that. That kind of behavior, that'll end up in a lawsuit. I have to explain them things like that. They're definitely lacking in a lot of—and like, they'll say racist things. Typically there's always like, again, one or two kids that will try, and then you just correct them. But this group is definitely a lot more, I have to explain to them, like why it's not okay to say certain things and they're not shy. They're like, "But why? But why this, but isn't it okay if I say it and I want to say it about myself?" And I'm like if you want to go home and say it about yourself with your parents, that's your business. I'm not going to follow you, but in the classroom, you don't do that and this is why, but it's still confusing to them. So, yeah.

29:55 - 30:07

SR: Well, were you involved in any activism or participate in protests? And if so, can you explain a little bit more about your experience in activism or participating in that?

30:08 - 33:54

LR: Oh, well, like in college with MECHA, I think to me it's activism to reach into the migrant communities, children of farm workers up there. And so I think that was huge because they're the least likely to end up being successful in college. So for me that was huge. And I did protests. I don't even remember what they were about, but I think there was a California proposition. Maybe it was the three strikes law or the immigration law. I can't remember them off the top of my head, but I remember protesting those. I remember taking over the administration building maybe when they were doing something with what is that called, affirmative action. I just I never enjoyed being in decision making. I was like, "Where do you want me to go?" Just didn't want to do any of that decision making. Then as an adult here in Los Angeles, oh, well in grad school as

well, I worked with other students of color to try to form a student of color association in the grad school program we were in. I think it's existed for a long time after I left, but I started it with a few people there because we felt like there was no way to retain us or to hold our interest in being there as a community. I think we all had to find our own communities apart from the program, whereas the white people, they found their community in their program. And so I think we were trying to create a community in the program that people of color could feel part of and feel like the school was working for us too. So we formed the group, and we just wanted to, I think, encourage the admin to consider that, consider creating spaces or hiring faculty that would serve us. So I think that was pretty much it in grad school. Yeah. And then when I came back here just little with the Mujeres de Maiz, but it was more like helping support, like the work, the labor. And that was it. Yeah, and since then I got married and have kids, I'd just been hanging out at home. With the teacher strike, participated in that and, again, try to help. My friend was the UTLA rep at our school and, I mean, I know she wanted me to also do something like that. I was like, I just can't with my kids, but I'll do something that requires tedious work every day. She's like, okay, you're in charge of attendance. So I'd have to go through the whole staff and make sure everyone was there and mark them there everyday. Everyone was always looking for me to make—but I was like, that's dirty work. I'll do it! I'll help you with that, I don't mind doing that. So I'm always up for that kind of stuff. I just don't want to make decisions.

34:00 - 34:14

CB: Is there a reason why you don't like making decisions or just kind of you wanna leave it to other people?

LR: I don't know why...**laughs**

CB: **laughs** I mean, I'm the same way, so I totally get it.

34:16 - 35:33

LR: I don't know. I just don't—I feel like I'm not a quick thinker. I'm not a quick decision maker. I need days to make a decision. And I feel like someone who's in the head position has to decide on the spot. If I have to do that, I'm going to make bad decisions. Like I need like three days to process something before I decide, and I don't think a leader can do that. I don't know. I mean, it works in my house, I make a lot of decisions day to day for my kids, but to be in charge of a whole school or a whole department or something— I guess if it was something that I was an expert at, which I am at home. So we have a small science department, like seven teachers, and I've been asked several times to be the department chair, but I'm like, I can't, I just can't and *that* I would feel comfortable doing, except I have my kids that I have to take care of so that I can't spare all that extra time. But I would feel comfortable doing that because I am an expert in

science, at least science education from my point of view. But I just don't have time to do that. So it's either a time thing or a skill thing.

35:36 - 35:44

CB: And then final question. How has being an artist kept you inspired or motivated during the pandemic?

35:45 - 37:54

LR: Oh, I just, it takes my mind away from stress or things that might be stressful. Like if I could throw some art skill into a like, I've written my own students' exams and I make them pretty challenging and I do five versions because I don't like cheating and those kids are master cheaters, so I'm really good. So I always tell them it's open notes, you can use Google all you want. You know, it's so fun to watch them try to cheat because they can't because I literally write the test the day before and I do all the artwork on the computer, like, I'll get other images, but I'll modify them using my art program or I'll make videos to clips to describe how to do things. So anytime I can do my art as part of my work, it helps de-stress me from the fact that I have to write five exams that I *want* to write five exams. I'm like, oh, but I get to do art in between. So it's kind of fun. It's fun. It's funny to watch some try to do - some of them are pretty savvy - like they do reverse image search, and they can't find anything. I'm like, you could try to use Google, but I'll tell you, it'll take you 10 times longer to find something when you could've just looked in your notes and found it. But for me, writing five versions of an exam is also an art. I don't know. Cause it's like you have to think about everything we've done for the last six weeks. Think about all the skills that the kids have tried to piece together, like five versions of a test that will test all their skills, but at different levels because some of them are advanced and some of them are really behind. And so for me, that's also like an art. It's like a challenge, but done within the capacity of skills that I have, it's a good distraction for me. And I'm a procrastinator, so it's like, if I could do something I like then it'll make me feel like I'm making progress on what I need to get done.

37:56 - 38:05

SR: I have one more question. Thank you for today. What is something - like a piece of advice - you'd give your younger self?

38:06 - 39:55

LR: Oh, I guess practice talking to people more. Practice. Yeah. I think that would be it. 'Cause like one thing that's interesting about my kids, my own children is like, if we're in a store, like we're in a restaurant and there's like a cookie on the counter that they can buy for 50 cents, like as a child, I would never have asked my mom, "Can you buy that for me?" Or "Can you go..." because it would require her getting up, getting the money out and going to buy it herself. But for

my kids, I'm like, I put the fifty cents on the table and that's it. So they know they have to get the money and then go ask the cashier if they can buy it and then pay for it and then bring back the change. Like that kind of stuff I could never have done it as a kid, but both of my kids will do that all the time. They'll do whatever they need to get what they want. And I was never like that. So like, I would tell myself, talk more, talk more to people, talk more to your teachers, talk more, ask more, ask for more help. Don't be afraid to get help. I think that's the big thing. My mom's like that. My sister was telling me, "I told mom, I'll go to the store. I'm going to go to the store right now, do you need anything for Thanksgiving?" She said, "Oh no, no, no, I got it. And if I don't I'll go later." She's [*her sister*] like, "But I'll go! I'm going right now so I can get it for you right now." And my mom was like, "Okay, no, no, no, I'm good. But if I find something, I'll get it later." *laughs* And my sister's like, "But I'm going, like why wouldn't she just tell me?" I was like, "You know, that's how *you* are, right?" And that's how I am. It's like, we just don't ask for help. It's just not easy. I don't know why we have to do everything ourselves.

39:57 - 40:08

CB: I definitely understand that I'm the same way too where I just don't ever want to ask for help if I like—I'll just drain myself to the very last second and then I'll be like, okay, maybe I'll ask for help now.

40:08 - 41:05

LR: Yeah. Yeah. I would tell myself too—I think if I talked more to people than I would understand that not all people are, I guess, bad, cause I'm weary of people, but to just talk more. Now I'm not so weary, but as a kid, I was. Now I speak up, probably overspeak up really. Like teaching eighth graders or teaching rude kids or whatever. It doesn't phase me, nothing phases me. Like I always tell my kids, I'm not afraid of anything. I'm afraid of a cockroach in my bed, but other than that, no, like now I'm fearless now, but as a kid, I was so fearful. I would tell myself, just talk more so that you engage more and reach out to people more and learn that you can use people for support and things like that.

41:10 - 41:12

CB: Did you have any more questions, Shannon?

41:13 - 41:19

SR: No, I think we got all our questions answered. Thank you.

LR: Oh, yeah. You're welcome.

41:20 - 41:24

CB: I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving and thank you so much for talking with us today!