

Transcript of Interview with Shay Koloff by Kit Heintzman

Interviewee: Shay Koloff

Interviewer: Kit Heintzman

Date: 06/10/2022

Location (Interviewee): Colorado Springs, Colorado

Location (Interviewer):

Transcribed By: Angelica S Ramos

Some of the things we discussed include:

Being on a cruise with an exposed passenger just as the pandemic had started. Moving from Oklahoma to Colorado in 2020; housing prices; meeting new people in the community online; mother moving to Colorado to join. Working at a medical office offering medical cannabis cards pre-pandemic, changing careers mid-pandemic and becoming an entrepreneur. The pandemic push to support small businesses. Working outside the home and inside the home and motherhood; spending time with daughter. Young daughter's (3-5 years old) understanding of the pandemic. Hyperactivity, homeschooling, and in classroom learning. Surface level friendships. Long battle with health issues, body image. Having lost 100lbs during the pandemic; having more grace and kindness with the self, body dysmorphia. Becoming more hopeful. Being African American and while living in a predominantly Caucasian city and with a predominantly Caucasian friend group. Starting an anonymous blog as a space to share experiences of being a Black woman in America. Police brutality, murdered and missing Indigenous women, sex trafficking. USA drowned towns. Raising a daughter and watching abortion laws change. Catching COVID in early 2022 shortly after vaccination; worries about infecting mother in her 60s. Managing COVID symptoms with herbal medicines. Easy access to vaccination, inaccessible testing and testing results. Returning to fun childhood activities, reading. The pandemic as a reset, a reminder of impermanence.

Kit Heintzman 00:00

Hello.

Shay Koloff 00:04

Hello

Kit Heintzman 00:04

Would you please start by stating your full name, the date, the time and your location?

Shay Koloff 00:09

Shay Koloff. It is June 10 2022. I am in Colorado Springs, Colorado. And it are 2:30pm.

Kit Heintzman 00:28

And do you consent to having this interview recorded, digitally uploaded and publicly released under a Creative Commons license attribution noncommercial sharealike?

Shay Koloff 00:38

Yes.

Kit Heintzman 00:39

Can I just start by asking you to introduce yourself to anyone who might find themselves listening to this, what would you want them to know about you and the place you're coming from?

Shay Koloff 00:49

Hi, yes, well, like I said, my name is Shay Koloff, and I am a master entrepreneurs, a creative a person who really has no rhyme or reason or plan, but can make things happen. That's who I am

Kit Heintzman 01:15

Tell me a story about life and the pandemic.

Shay Koloff 01:20

Honestly, well, you know, what's, what's funny is we, me and my husband, initially had actually went on a cruise right as the pandemic was starting. And we actually had, I think, someone on our boat that was being exposed during that trip, because on our way back, we were actually delayed by a day because there was someone who was in medical need. And after that, it was two days on the you know, just not getting to touch anything, and everyone wearing gloves, and it was just very suspicious. So right when we got back, that's when the pandemic really hit, I got back to back to the US on a Monday went back to work on a Wednesday was sent home on a Friday and just never went back. And it really kind of changed things from there. So kind of like going from being on vacation to being a complete lockdown for the last three years almost has been kind of an adjustment, I would say. But that's that really was a big push for us to move and change our lives. Because at the beginning, we were living in Oklahoma. So now that we live in Colorado, we actually made a lot of big changes during this pandemic, actually,

Kit Heintzman 02:49

What motivated those changes?

Shay Koloff 02:52

I think it was a mixture of depression. And wanting to, like just take control, in a very hopeless situation. I think when everything around you is falling apart, there's not very many things you can do. And at the time, you know, my husband was still working full time going to work. And I was working from home at the time, because our jobs had let us stay home. And I was kind of doing work on and off. But during that first three months that everything was pretty much shut down, I was spending a lot of time at my house and just feeling like, you know, inspired but also, you know, just completely exasperated at the entire thing, the entire situation, just not knowing what was going to happen next, not knowing when this was going to end. And we had always wanted to move to Colorado we have visited many times before the pandemic and really wanted to make a change, but we didn't really know how. And then it was in August of 2020. And we and my husband were just driving home and he said, You know, I'm really sick of my job, I'm really sick of you know, just how things are going and just, you know, the pandemic was really just dragging everything down. And he said, You know, I'm just really tired of everything. And I said, Well, if you're tired then make a change. Because, you know, I personally had been only working part time and I was in my entrepreneurship but very very, very much at the beginning like I had only had a business for a year, online and still working part time. So my business wasn't really supporting us or anything but I told him you know, I am ready to move when you are and so he within like the next week had applied for a job and then the week after that had gotten or had got approved. And then after that we had applied for an

apartment and got approved and then within three weeks we were in Colorado so it happened pretty fast but the thought of it was year is in the making. And I think the pandemic kind of just pushed it up for us because you know, it kind of puts life into perspective when everyone is getting sick and dying around you, and you don't really know, you know when or if you're going to be able to make plans. So that was probably a big motivator.

Kit Heintzman 05:19

What was moving like during the pandemic? Did you hire movers or not hire them? How did you get there? Like, what was that like?

Shay Koloff 05:28

It was hilarious. Actually, we did not hire any movers, we just decided that we were going to pack up. So when we lived in our old house, in Oklahoma, we had a three bedroom. And I want to put this on the record for the perspective because this was 2020. And we had a three bedroom house with like a half acre yard and all of this space, and then we're moving to Colorado, and we have a one bedroom apartment. And we went from paying 750 for this house to paying like almost 900 For this apartment. And my husband took a \$2 pay cut for this job, doing the exact same thing that he was doing, where we lived, we just he just wanted to get out so bad. He was like, I will take anything at this point if you are hiring. And so the move itself was exciting. It was a stressful, it was also really scary. And it was hard because like I said, we we didn't really have any friends or family to support the entire thing. We didn't know anyone here, really, we just packed all of our stuff, our three bedroom house into like this 10 foot trailer, nothing's like, when I tell you nothing fit. I mean, we literally packed this thing to the brim and just drove it 700 miles to Colorado. And when we got here, we're just like unpacking and I'm thinking to myself, Oh my gosh, I hope all of this stuff even fits in this apartment. And it was just a very, it was a very eye opening experience, because I had moved before but I had never moved like this with a family. And, you know, it was very scary. But it was also, I think, a really good time to do. So the pandemic had a lot of downsides, but also had, I think a lot of positives as well, it opened a lot of doors for a lot of people, it created a lot of opportunities and a lot of you know, positive for some and you know, really bad negative for others. But I think we've all had an up and down with the situation. However, the move for us overall was definitely a positive. It was a really hard thing to do. But we did it and we just did it as a family. And a tiny little U haul. Here we are.

Kit Heintzman 07:58

What was that like getting to know the new environment?

Shay Koloff 08:03

The new well, it was really hard at first because since we moved here with no family, no friends, my husband was working a lot. We had one car, I was, like I said kind of doing my own business, but mostly online. And so we did not get to do a lot of exploring or really getting to know the area even though we weren't familiar because we had been here before, it took some time to really get to adjust. And even the first I would say the first like six months were really difficult. We were you know, just really stressed out, you know, didn't really get to didn't really know anyone. We were on a reduced income and a new place. And at the time, since I still had been pandemic, my daughter, you know, wasn't able to go to school. So I ended up homeschooling her for another year while we lived here. So that whole year, the first year, we were here, I was home a lot with my daughter, doing homeschooling, and not really getting to, you know, not getting to see things. So it was really a mixed situation moving here and just not getting all of the all of the positives right away. I would say it was 50/50 We got to see a lot of things and it took some time. But it was it was it was easier for sure to see the more popular places closer to where we live

and getting to do some things as a family like on weekends and in free days and just kind of I met a lot of like new people in the community through groups online and just kind of integrated myself basically, you know, with my interests, you know, whatever. I'm interested in just finding other people that were interested in eventually. It's been almost two years now for us and I have You know, a really good solid group of friends and we have, we no longer live in the apartment, but we live in a one bedroom house, which is a little bit of an upgrade because at least we have a yard and, and, and yeah, so it has been pretty interesting to say the least.

Kit Heintzman 10:20

What was your day to day looking like in the pre pandemic world?

Shay Koloff 10:27

Before the pandemic was completely different, I worked at a, at a hospital overnight for a long time when my daughter was first born, but right before the pandemic, I was working at a marijuana, just like a marijuana office that gives you know medical card. And so we were I was working that job, you know, every day, pretty much. And, you know, I had a routine, I took my daughter to school, she was in like a little pre K program. So, before it was definitely, you know, just a routine, I get up, take her to school, go to work, take my husband to work, and then get off work, pick her up, pick him up, do it all over again. I would say you know, before it was it was it was it was stagnant, it was still, you know, it was quiet, I would say I definitely needed to make changes about my life, but did not have necessarily like any real direction or push or motivation or even any, I would say even in the idea, I guess about what it was that I wanted to do to make things you know, different, better, improved. And so before the pandemic, I definitely felt like I was stuck, but did not have really much of a direction of what I really want it to do. And how to, you know, just enjoy, kind of where I was, I was kind of a lot, definitely a lot more depressed and a lot more, you know, just sad about my life circumstances, just, you know, having families are hard, especially the way like, in the world is. So before I was saying it was normal, but normal to a different degree normal to the the the way of which life becomes a fail picture of things that you do all the time. And after the pandemic became a jigsaw puzzle of a picture that we had to put back together. And so luckily, everything stayed together. But our scenery changed, our attitude changed. Our environment changed, just a lot of things changed with the pandemic, for sure. But that's how I'm seeing it. Just the same but different.

Kit Heintzman 13:13

Would you share something about I think there's been such a strong narrative about 2020 and 2021. And now being especially hard to live in with the pandemic, but also with everything else. Would you say something about like what was just hard about living in the world pre pandemic?

Shay Koloff 13:32

Just living in the world? Wow, that's a hard one. Um I would say no real, no real. No real dire need for connection or being outside or enjoying like nature, those kinds of things. I think a lot of our society what we are used to now is being indoors being stuck in these boxes of a nine to five a regular job, a constrictive narrative that, you know, you are obligated to live. And a lot of us don't know what it is to have a zest for something. If we did, you know, your parents would tell you and you know, in the past that, you know, that wouldn't pay your bills or that wasn't a real job or you you would never, you know, be able to do anything with that. But now, you know, we're in a completely different time where things are changing. I think. Before the pandemic, I experienced a lot of loneliness and feeling that a lot of connection that most people craved was numbed connection. Just, you know, going out to bars or you know, smoking or drinking and just, you know, never really having deep connection with

other people just very surface level kind of conversation. And the I think that that was really hard pre pandemic for me. So like, just never really, truly having full connections with people, never really knowing how to have full connections with people. Because if you're not into the same thing, or if you don't believe the same things, or if you're, if you're, you know, a little bit different, it can be challenging, it can be difficult to connect with others, and a lot of people have very standoff type of energies that they put towards, you know, things that they don't understand. So I think post pandemic definitely opened up people's brains, minds heart, to being more open to connection, being more open to learning about people and actually like, wanting to build a real environment, outside of just the house. So definitely a lot better, I think with just feeling like the world has become a little bit more a little bit more easier to navigate communication wise. Before I think was a lot more difficult.

Kit Heintzman 16:45

To the extent that you're comfortable sharing, would you say something about your experiences of health and healthcare infrastructure pre pandemic?

Shay Koloff 16:55

Well, before, I would say, I mean, as far as health goes, I've always had a bit of a struggle with my health. But right as pandemic was starting, I have been battling a lot of my own health issues. And I think a lot of that came from, like I said, you know, some of it had to do with mental, you know, just depression, anxiety, stress, those kinds of things. But health wise, I did have, you know, diabetes, high blood pressure, not necessarily high blood pressure on but you know, pre onset, and just struggling a lot with my weight, and my body image and just feeling good about myself feeling healthy. And so, before the pandemic was a lot of feeling, like, stuck, even in the way of my health, feeling like I have done a lot of things that should have worked, should have helped, but did not do anything for me. And so I left a lot of hopelessness in the pre pandemic stage. I think I have a lot more hope now. But after the pandemic, kind of offered me a lot more opportunity and understanding and patience into being more open to how my body needs to be nurtured, if that makes sense.

Kit Heintzman 18:47

What motivated you to start the businesses that you started?

Shay Koloff 18:53

Well, it really started with my daughter back in 2017. She was born in 2016. I had stayed home for the first year when she was born. And then in 2017, I started to go back to work. And I just really hated missing a lot of time with my daughter and feeling like I just didn't get to see her a lot and just feeling like I didn't get to see a lot of my family because we had to you know work different schedules. And so it feels like the the time that I had in those in that particular stage of life. When I was starting my business was very, I really didn't know what I was doing. I had the idea that I wanted to have more time with my family. I wanted to be more present for my daughter. So I literally just told my husband I said, you know, what if I started a business and he said, Yeah, you know, sure, like your creative, what would you do? And I said, I have no idea, I don't know. And I told him, I said, you know, I'm sure I could come up with something, people make things all the time. And then it's like, I just decided, you know, I'm gonna rummage through my closet, and I picked out this random old bag of like crafting beads, my husband had, and I said, you know, I'm gonna make jewelry, I'm just gonna make jewelry and, and so it kind of just started as a spur of the moment random idea to start a business in 2018. Or, I'm sorry, 2019. That was when my daughter was two and a half, almost, I think she was three at that point. And it really just started with a bag of beads, because I wanted to try to see if I could even make a business work. So I could, you know, make my own

schedule, make my own time and just be more present in my family's life. And from there, it really grew. It went from jewelry to you know, just resin crafts, to all kinds of stuff, candles, and body care. And in all of that. When I moved here in 2020, I decided to rebrand my business because I really needed to, you know, figure out how I was going to make this business work, we were moving to an estate, like I said, I wasn't really working like any regular job at the time. So I really wanted to work really hard on my business. And I decided to rebrand. Change the name change the concept, because at the time, I was getting a lot more into gardening and being more into herbs, and learning about the natural ways that you can, you know, boost immunity or heal yourself or things like that. So when I moved, I told him I said, you know, I'm really sad that I don't have a garden anymore, because in Oklahoma, we had a huge one. And he said, Well, you know, you can, you can still buy herbs, you can still make things with herbs. And that was really kind of what started it, I decided, you know, I was going to start learning more about herbs and how to make more things with them. So I started that really grow grew into making tea, making tonic, making oils, making all kinds of body care products and things like that, that I wasn't making before. It really grew from a passion of I wanted at first, like everyone else, I think sometimes when you start a business, you want to make money, the easiest, quickest way possible in the most convenient way. And from there, it grew into a real passion for you know, working for myself and, and making products that mattered to me and taking care of myself and being an advocate for herbal healing and holistic health in the end in things that a lot of people have no doubts about, a lot of people don't really know much about. But my goal, for the most part of anything, is to help people learn that they can still use modern medicine and still use holistic medicine at the same time. And so that became a really big passion for me, especially after 2020 When I was diagnosed with PCOS, right before moving. And so with that, it really helped me understand what was going on with my body and how to be more, you know, healthy. And from there, that's really where my business not only kind of took off, but also my health journey.

Shay Koloff 23:48

I became a lot healthier, I became a lot happier. I lost over 100 pounds within the last year and a half that I've lived, you know, in Colorado and my business has really taken off, you know, just from education just from learning and being proactive in my business and the business world and networking and getting to know other people. And that has been probably the biggest positive to my business journey.

Kit Heintzman 24:21

Would you tell me more about PCOS, particularly in the context of your experience of it?

Shay Koloff 24:28

Yes. So, PCOS is it stands for polycystic ovary syndrome. And it is a disease that basically attacks your hormones. So you you've kind of have like a hormone imbalance can cause it can cause a lot of issues in the body but particularly for me I experienced a, like a discoloration in skin, weight gain, fatigue, acne diabetes type two trying to think if there's anything else that I experienced per per se, oh, and irregular, irregular menstrual cycles, painful menstrual cycles as well. So those were what I experienced. And so over the last six years, I had symptoms, and I and I did not know, where those were stemming from I, I believe it was stemming from previous medical, medical medicine that I have taken that could have, you know, possibly caused it. But I think that it's a mixture of just genetics and birth control, which I personally, you know, it hormone birth control, for sure, definitely can cause these issues. And I was on birth control for a very long time when I was a teen. So I think a mixture of just you know, being an African American genetics, or control, all of these things caused this particular thing to happen. And because of that, over the last couple of years, it's been a struggle, but I've been able to really

control my symptoms with herbal medicine, including more herbal tea, including more tonics, and, and when I say tonic, I need like a, like a texture, which is basically just a concentration of herbs. I use an apple cider vinegar base, which most people would use an alcohol. But because of the apple cider vinegar, it really is helpful for your body, it also is very good for obviously, your gut health, it's really good for all kinds of things. And so, you know, when I started incorporating, you know, more tea, more healthy, you know, things into my body that I just wasn't doing before, you know, started really taking my health seriously and understanding what was going on, that really pushed me in the right direction to be able to actually take care of my health in ways that modern medicine wasn't able to provide.

Kit Heintzman 27:36

Do you remember when you first heard about the pandemic?

Shay Koloff 27:42

You know, it was right. I think at the very beginning of 2020. I do remember, you know, very vaguely, because I'm not a person who really watches the news, I don't watch the news, I don't really keep up with a lot of politics or things like that. But I do hear in there, you know, stick my ear in. And so I did hear that there was a sickness going around that, you know, could have been from a different country and that people weren't getting sick. My first initial thought was, you know, okay, it's probably just something like, you know, the flu or like when we all had the, I forgot what the other one was that everyone was kind of freaking out about and both years before, but just, you know, when a sickness comes most most of the time, you know, it's a very swift and quick situation and it goes back to normal. So when I had heard about it, it was basically I think in the news like back in the beginning of 2020 20. And I kind of just brushed it off I kind of said, Okay, well you know, if it becomes a thing I guess we'll know about it. And then from there it progressed like I said, it was like I went on a cruise literally that March and right when I came back, we were pretty much in lockdown. So it progressed pretty quickly from just being like a rumor to being like a you know, very small case by case basis to everyone is getting it everywhere. It seems kind of just like a when I first heard about it, it just kind of seemed like you know, one of those things where I don't know if I'm just that kind of person, but I feel like when it comes to politics, you know, you never know what's true, what's false. What's a, you know, an exaggeration to get a boat, so I personally didn't know if it was going to be a real theme or if it was, you know, just some kind of, you know, hocus pocus they came up with so they can get, you know, voters to come up with, you know, a thing and so it just really hit me the beginning of that year and then from there, it really took off. So

Kit Heintzman 29:56

How much do you think? Sorry. How old was your daughter at the time?

Shay Koloff 30:05

When that happened, she was four. Or she was three. Sorry, she was three, when we first found out, she turned four that year.

Kit Heintzman 30:19

How much do you think she's understood about what's going on?

Shay Koloff 30:25

I believe that she does know what's going on. Because she well, I mean, as much as, as much of what she knows, I think is as much as a child can comprehend. She is five, and she is about to turn six in September. And so she does know that it was a sickness. And that it is caught from you know, being too close to people and, you know, touching and things like that. So I think she kind of understands that, like, if you touch people, or you're too, you know, not friendly. Sometimes you can catch sicknesses. I think she kind of understands that. I don't know if she really understands the actual impact of which it really was. I am getting into my car. So one second, it's going to be a little loud

Shay Koloff 31:34

okay, but yeah, so for, for the most part, yeah, I think she, I think she kind of got that it was a, that it was a very serious thing as far as like everyone being sick, and her not being able to go to school. And her happy to wear a mask and things like that. But she, for the most part, I don't think she knows the actual impact of it all. Not like how it impacted the world and that kind of thing.

Kit Heintzman 32:05

I'm curious, what does the word help mean to you?

Shay Koloff 32:07

Did you say help, or health?

Kit Heintzman 32:13

Health.

Shay Koloff 32:18

Like t-h,

Kit Heintzman 32:19

yeah, t-h

Shay Koloff 32:22

Well, what does the word health mean to me? Um I

Shay Koloff 32:30

Man, that's a good one. I associate it with how, how you take care of yourself how people decide to build a daily regimen for their life. Obviously, some people don't think of their health because a lot of people love to write, you know, drink smoke party, you know, eat out every day. drink soda, sugary things, you know, that kind of stuff. So when I think of health, I just think of you know, how people choose to take care of themselves how to how people, or don't choose to take care of themselves. You know, how how people live their lives, and you know, what they, what they consume, what they eat? Is how I picture it.

Kit Heintzman 33:31

What are some of the things you'd like for your own health? And maybe how have those changed over time?

Shay Koloff 33:38

Wow, what I would like, I think, for my own health is more I will say more patient and more understanding about the body and just being like, being understanding with myself, I think also having some some grace, because I have had a very difficult experience with my help. And I would say that like I said, when I moved here I believe I was not I was not my heaviest, but I was still pretty heavy, probably about 250 The heaviest that I have ever been was like closer to like 290. So like almost 300 pounds. And there's nothing wrong with that. You know, I think a lot of people can be big, be healthy. I don't think it has anything to classify as far as what your body size is or how much you weigh. But I do think that it has to do with obviously how you take care of yourself and I was not a very healthy person. Especially back in those times when I was heavier. You know, I ate out a lot. I did not really take care of myself. I didn't you know, didn't work out I didn't go to the gym didn't take anything herbal. So I definitely wasn't putting any type of actual good nutrients in my body that I that I think would have truly helped me. But I think for the most part, when it comes to how people how people look at the overall journey I, I really struggled with actually losing the weight, and then losing the weight and then actually being okay with it. Because now that I am, and I haven't even weighed myself, I haven't weighed myself a month, I have no idea how much I weigh. The last time that I checked, I was closer to about 180. So like I said, I've lost about 100 pounds. And for me, it has been an adjustment. It has been really hard. I've struggled with it mentally. I haven't been till I mean, I do have a therapist, but I haven't been like diagnosed with anything, but I definitely feel like I have some kind of body dysmorphia. You know, it's very uncomfortable for me to think of myself as skinny, or as fit or as small. Those are like the words I think they give me the most cringe. So that's why I say when it comes to my health journey, I really would love to just become like more gracious, more, you know, more courteous to myself and allow myself to be proud of where I am. But also like, Be okay with myself. Not feel uncomfortable, basically.

Kit Heintzman 36:42

Would you be willing to share something about where you learned ideas about what is a healthy body?

Shay Koloff 36:52

I believe I learned kind of, you know, I think I learned a lot of that from Oh, well, these are some good questions. I think it came from media, maybe in a good and bad way. I don't think I learned that from my household really, or from like, my childhood I had my mom isn't a person who is malicious on purpose. She never, you know, made me feel like bad for being overweight, or for being you know, bigger than most children. I think my mom just always kind of made it, you know, like, kind of just brushed it off, you know, should we just say, well, it's okay. Because, you know, you're just you're sick, foamed it and it's like, that's what people used to think. But they would just say, you know, oh, you just go you know, you just go big boned. Did you know, it's no problem, like, you know, you're not, you know, ugly or anything like that, you know, by any means. But my mom just never was that kind of person who truly had like, the right thing to say, I learned a lot of my body image content from movies and shows. I watched a lot of just different types of like, you know, kids demographics type shows when I was younger, that kind of taught you, you know, different, different lessons about what it is to, you know, be a teenager and what it's like to go through those changes. I didn't even really, I didn't even really have this issue. I don't even think in high school, I just learned a lot of my body image from watching TV because in high school, I barely associated with people I just was, you know, I kind of stuck to myself, even though I was chubby. I had friends I didn't, you know, I don't think I was ever picked on or made to feel bad for, you know, not being like a certain look. But I just learned how to accept myself from watching TV and like seeing some representations of like larger people, even if some of those larger people in shows weren't even portrayed in good ways. You know, maybe they were portrayed as like the, you know, like the chubby funny friend or the girl who, you know, was kind of the main character but wasn't the main character because the show was really about her not getting picked

because of how she looked, that kind of thing. So it kind of put into perspective for me that I always wanted to look a certain way, but I never felt bad about it until losing weight and then feeling like now I do, like closer than ever. I probably you know, make someone feel uncomfortable because I'm smaller. And that is a really weird situation to be in. But, yeah, a lot of that for media, the good and the bad.

Kit Heintzman 40:10

What's it been like homeschooling your daughter?

Shay Koloff 40:16

Well, she just went back to school this year. But the years that I, homeschooled was very interesting. It was, it was challenging for sure. It puts into perspective for you, like your child, you know, individual needs, my daughter has not been tested, but she is waiting on testing. So she does have some kind of hyperactivity disorder. And so for her, you know, she has a lot of attention a lot of one on one time to really get her work done, and to feel like she's making progress. And so when I was doing Homeschooling with her, it felt, you know, it felt very, it felt very intimate, but also felt very, very stressful, because I worry, I worried that when she started school, she would not get, you know, a teacher who would take the time to maybe, you know, stop and really watch her do a problem, or, you know, have a teacher who would really stop and do, you know, work on reading with her if she really was, you know, struggling those kinds of things. But that's what the overall experience was, you know, it was really nice, it was so nice to just be involved in my daughter's learning, to see her learn to see her grow, to help her with her development, and to assist her in really getting ready for school. Even though like I don't know if I mentioned it already, but I mean, she, she is repeating kindergarten, she started kindergarten and she's repeating it, like I said, I think mainly because of the attention deficit, not necessarily because of the academics, but she just started kindergarten very early. The homeschooling I think, really got me very confident in my abilities to teach my daughter because she was just doing so well with me. And I didn't put in to account that when she went to school, she would then be encountered with students and sensitivities, you know, talking and kids everywhere, and just feeling very overstimulated. So for her school was very hard this year, because she really had to adjust to the social aspect, not the academic. So that was a very interesting part of it as well.

Kit Heintzman 42:57

What was that like for you, for her to go back to school?

Shay Koloff 43:03

It was partially a relief. Partially very scary. I was hoping that she would get a good teacher and have you know, a good class with you know, make friends and learn a lot. And so, going back to school, I had really, you know, I was very optimistic, very optimistic about it and was just hoping that she would have a good experience and come out of it with you know, ready to go back through next year. And so it was definitely it was definitely exciting to get her into school.

Kit Heintzman 43:47

What does the word safety mean to you?

Shay Koloff 43:57

I would say that safety means just feeling I guess comfortable in your surroundings. Having security and and I guess like whatever is going on in that moment. It's so hard to feel safe these days. But I guess that that would be

the easiest way for me to describe it. It's just feeling comfortable in in the surroundings, no matter. You know who you're with or where you're at or what you're doing just knowing that it's going to be a good situation based off of what's going on around you.

Kit Heintzman 44:52

Would you share some of the things that make it so hard to feel safe right now?

Shay Koloff 45:01

Oh, yeah, yeah, I would say for sure. A lot of what I do feel, has made it really difficult is like America, like the American system of like, class and race and that kind of thing. It's, it's kind of like that being I like to say like, you know, like, I feel like people are looking at other people as the outside of a shell. And I like to use this analogy. And let me know if at any point, it gets hard to hear because I'm going into my office, and I'm hoping that you don't lose me with the signal. Okay,

Kit Heintzman 45:59

Thanks for letting me know.

Shay Koloff 46:01

Okay, of course, you can you still hear me?

Kit Heintzman 46:04

Yep. Loud and clear.

Shay Koloff 46:06

Perfect. Okay. So can you repeat the question, to be sure that I'm on the right page,

Kit Heintzman 46:26

You had said that it was really that, like, in general, it's hard to feel safe these days. And I was asking,

Shay Koloff 46:34

yeah,

Kit Heintzman 46:35

what some of the reasons are?

Shay Koloff 46:38

Yeah. So the main reasons I feel like I was saying I remember now is, is yeah, the the separation, the segregation that still exist in our world, like, the analogy that I like to use is, what kind of egg Do you like? Do you like the white egg? Do you like the brown egg? Do you like blue eggs? Do you like green eggs? You know? And some people you know the answer that was like, Yeah, you know, I like white eggs, because the brown eggs freaked me out, or I just don't like colored eggs or things like that. And I go, Well, why not? Because the egg inside is the same egg as any other egg. If you broke it, it would be the same. So why does it matter what the outside looks like? And that's how I feel it is in the world because we're all against each other for some reason, whether it's color of skin or firearms, or you know, war and in sickness or, or police brutality, because of these reasons, you

know, it's hard to feel like you can just be united and, and comfortable around others. You know, it feels like there's just this unspoken divide, that everyone should just unspoken only hate each other for some reason, you know. And that's what makes it hard to feel safe. You know, I don't know if I'm walking into a room and could easily trigger someone because of the color of my skin or easily trigger someone because of what I say or easily trigger someone just because of my existence, just because I'm there. It is hard to feel that especially when now there's shootings everywhere, you know, whether it I mean, a school, a grocery store, a movie theater, it just feels like you can't be social because you can't trust people because people don't trust each other.

Kit Heintzman 48:46

There's been this sort of really narrow discussion of safety in the context of COVID within that tiny sort of microcosm of what safety can look like what are some of the things you've been doing to make yourself feel safer?

Shay Koloff 48:59

A lot of what I've been doing to feel safer is I don't really go out to public places anymore. I I do go out to public places but I'm very selective about you know, just not feeling the need to always have to be in a large setting just because I used to go out a lot when I live in Oklahoma because I have a lot of friends and a lot of like what activities that they do is drinking and you know, dancing. going downtown is kind of like the big thing to do. And I personally just I never really have been a person who enjoys large crowds but I you know, I can have a good time obviously if I'm but not there for too long, I just kind of person, I think he gets tapped out by too much energy or something, but it has been helpful for me just knowing that, you know, I'm at home and, and I for that I'm at, you know, a place that isn't it I think also a chance for more connection one on one with others. When you're not in a room with a lot of other people, this will allow you to have conversations and to really actually, you know, be polite to these to these people, because there's not really around you. And so I've been helpful for me. Another thing has been, I actually started an anonymous page, like a blog. And I won't say the name, obviously, because it's anonymous, but it is like a page on Facebook and Instagram. And I just kind of share how I'm feeling. I think to you know, hear anyone's opinion or have anyone know me, and just kind of get to share what it's like to be a person of color like in America [inaudible]

Kit Heintzman 51:26

You are starting to get in and out

Shay Koloff 51:28

Okay, I'll just go back to my car, because I just wanna make sure you hear me. Yeah, my building is it has really bad reception. So sometimes you cannot hear and so I just don't want you to lose me while I'm doing the interview. But um

Kit Heintzman 51:56

The last solid part I heard was just the introduction of the anonymous blog as a place where you can share yourself.

Shay Koloff 52:05

Yes, yeah. So with the blog, I'm able to, you know, share my experiences, as you know, a black woman in America, and just what we go through and, you know, kind of what I'm thinking things that I don't feel like I

could otherwise share anywhere else. Publicly or, you know, to my friends or things like that, I think it's very difficult, especially coming from my my point of view, as a person of color living in a place with a lot of people from different places. But for the most part, everyone is Caucasian. And so I have a lot of friends, but most of my friends are Caucasian. And then I have I do have a good group of friends that are, you know, other races, African American, or you know, Asian American, or whatever, they identify us. So I do have other friends. But it's, you know, it's very difficult when you have different friends from different cultures, different backgrounds, and then being able to try to explain to them, you know, how you're feeling and things that you're thinking, especially when it comes to politics, and it comes to government. And it comes to a lot of the things especially with things that we've been going through these last couple of years, it's so hard to just share how you feel. So the blog is a place that I can do that. And it kind of helps me feel a little bit safer just getting to share those thoughts and feelings with other people who feel the same way or who might feel the same way or who relate to what I'm saying.

Kit Heintzman 53:37

I don't know how this question will land given the desire around anonymity related views so if that's the case, just like shut the question down. But something something I do ask regularly is that you know, the last few years have been so much more than just the pandemic what are some of the issues that have been on your mind and heart over the last few years?

Shay Koloff 54:09

Oh, you know, I mean, there's no there's been a lot of things on my mind. I think a lot of it has to do with a ton of things honestly.

Shay Koloff 54:21

Man, that's a loaded question. Ask it again because I feel like I just have too many answers.

Kit Heintzman 54:30

What are some of the things that have been on your mind and heart over the last two years that aren't just a pandemic?

Shay Koloff 54:41

Oh man, okay, I'm gonna try to go with what just first pops in my mind. So I would say honestly, of course, you know the entire thing with like a cop, just police brutality, not being able to, you know, feel like community and safeness with police. I put Shall we haven't had any experiences, but I know a lot of my friends who have, you know, feelings about it and animosity and things like that. Of course, those are, I say, leads back to the same thing I said before in that last question was that, you know, it's the divided, just this in sewn hatred in the lining of like our culture. And that's just part of it. I think the fact that we have so many women that are going missing in the indigenous lands, is a really big one that doesn't get enough. People talking about it doesn't get enough people, you know, really researching. And it's been a big one on my heart. Because I'm really big into, like true crime and unsolved mysteries and things like that. It's a really, very big hobby of mine. I love to just listen to podcasts and kind of hear about cases and things that are going on and a big one in, in my brain is the missing women and children, especially from sex trafficking as well. And just feeling, you know, a sense of it's, it's scary, it's really scary to think that you can't just go to a grocery store, you can't just help someone off the street, because you know, you could be kidnapped, you could be assaulted. That's really difficult to think about, like just being a woman is hard. And now, of course, with the, you know, the abortion laws that are taking place all over America,

obviously, that is, and like I said, What's funny is I know I said earlier, I'm not a big person into politics. But you know, I really didn't keep up with things that matter to me. These are the big things that matter to me, obviously, things that don't just affect me, but you know, that really, that really, that are big issues that just should have more people care about them. And definitely, that's a big one for me as well. Just not having any safety for women not having rights for women, of being able to choose, you know, what happens to our bodies, that's very scary. My daughter not being able to choose what happens to her body when she gets older. That's, you know, very terrifying to think of the fact that you know, she's a female and in America is scary enough. But another big one is spring from that adoption, we have so many children in the foster system in the adoption system that don't have home, they don't have any chances of ever having anyone take care of them. And our government is forcing us to have more kids. Though, they would take things that really weigh on my brain, the fact that prisoners get free food and our children don't. It drives me nuts, I think that our entire system is botched. But I tell my husband all the time, you know, when I have these moments, like I'm having with you talking about things that are really deep, I tell him, all those things really hurt, but how am I going to fix it? Who's going to change it? What protocol, what procedure? What kind of big thing would have to happen for us to truly have some kind of solution to these problems? And, you know, the silence is definitely because there is no answer to that. There's no answer to any of this. It's chaos. Organized Chaos by the government.

Kit Heintzman 59:08

How do you how do you think the pandemic shaped the reception of your business when you move to Colorado?

Shay Koloff 59:21

You know, I will say that that was one of the only one of the positives of the pandemic. Because so many businesses were shut down. Many people did turn to small business because they turned to small business we were able to, you know, really have a lot more support. I think a positive. On top of that was just moving to Colorado, moving to Colorado obviously opened a lot of opportunity for me because this was a completely different environment than where I was from. Being from Oklahoma. Obviously. Our nickname is the Bible Belt. It is very conservative. It is very Christian. Very is very close minded, very traditional. And moving here, where it is literally a melting pot full of people from all over the place. And, you know, all different types of religions and backgrounds and cultures really opened up a good channel for me and my business. Because so many people were looking for different things. And so that really helped my business flourish. And like I said, honestly, it being a small, small business boost, because not being able to access box stores or different places that people usually would go to, because of, you know, just not wanting to get sick or not wanting to be around people or not wanting to be closed, it really was very helpful for my business to take off and flourish in that way.

Kit Heintzman 1:00:53

How are you feeling about the immediate future?

Shay Koloff 1:01:00

I feel very scared. Very, very unsure, I really have no idea what is going to happen about

Shay Koloff 1:01:17

me in the next couple of days, even in the next couple of weeks, it feels like everything is just upside down. And so to remain optimistic and times like these takes immense strength and just constant mental reminders that it could be worse is literally just like my favorite line for like the pandemic, I, I've only gotten sick with COVID one

time in the entire time that the pandemic has existed. And I didn't even get it until just the beginning of this year. So that's how long it took for me to get sick. And I did just get vaccinated right before I got sick. So I say all that to say that even in the times of uncertainty, there will just always still be uncertainty. So I'm still very uncertain. I want to hope for better I want to hope for positive and like changes that will actually really change the world. But I'm not gonna like too optimistic in those ways, just just unsure.

Kit Heintzman 1:02:33

What was it like to catch COVID?

Shay Koloff 1:02:39

It was, it was. Well, at first it was really, it was really it was really jolting because you really, it feels like you don't know what it is. Because it does feel like a flu or like a regular cold or something, you know, your throat starts to maybe get a little, you know, a little scratchy or your nose starts to run a little bit. And so, because even before that we had gotten sick, but we got sick with something else. Something very kind of COVID like we're not COVID It was like a little flu or something. So before that we were all like in the house, no panicking, like Okay, does it COVID Do we have COVID and we took tests, and we were all negative. So we it was not it seemed like that was enough to cushion the actual sickness. Because the first time us just having the frenzy of like, oh my gosh, like, do we have COVID? Or, or you know, especially with my mom, my mom is a close member of our family and she is in her 60s. So anytime that I get sick, of course my main thought is, you know, have I been around my mom, you know, is she at risk, those kinds of things. And, and she works at a nursing home. So I mean, it's very, like my brain is always kind of like I'm worried about her. But initially getting it was really rough. It was just like you were really sick and you had a lot of coughing. A lot of congestion a lot of runny nose, I mean the worst kind of drainage just feeling like I used like 20 million different tissue boxes like over that two week period. It was just awful. But yeah, it was it was a very interesting experience. It also kind of just helps you understand like how serious it is to just be cleanly wash your hands. You know, don't touch people don't cough on people, you know, try to if you have to go in a public place like a large place like Walmart or Target. Hand Sanitizer, use your masks. Even if you're vaccinated because I mean, that's the that's the funny thing is even with this I got vaccinated because I hadn't gotten sick yet. And I said you know, okay, the vaccination will clearly just make sure that we don't get sick, and I personally feel like the vaccination is why I got sick. This is a big one. reason why I'm into herbal medicine, because I feel like normal medicines these days, you just don't know you just can't trust, the scientists are being honest about what is really going on in the medical field. So when it's herbal, at least if I make it myself, I know what's in it. And I know that I can trust it. But I did take a lot of herbal medicine while I was sick. And it was very helpful. I had a such a scratchy, itchy throat from all the coughing. And I took a natural hackberry syrup that I made out of like these chokecherries out of all of these bushes that are these trees that we have on here. And that was like one of my biggest things that I it was so helpful for my throat. During that process, and stuff like that, you know, I we did a lot of like gingers, citrus, lemon, honey, those kinds of things to just help us get better. My daughter was literally only sick for like, three days, four days, she was fine. Me and her dad were sick for like two weeks. And so yeah, it was it was a very interesting experience, you know, definitely would not recommend

Kit Heintzman 1:06:18

What's access to testing and vaccination then like for you?

Shay Koloff 1:06:24

Um, you know, the access has not been bad, I would say, it is difficult. If you are looking for testing places that are legit. As far as full testing to make sure that like you are going to get your results back in a timely fashion. We have had some incidences, like I said, the first time we thought we were sick, we went and got tested. And my husband at the time was working. So because he thought he was sick, they did put him on a quarantine. And waiting for his test results literally took two weeks, the first time because we went to a place that wasn't maybe the most efficient. So it took a long time before we even got test back tests back from them. And then the second time around, we were able to go to you know, a place that was very, very much more convenient, you just pull up, they do the test right there on the car. And you're able to get the results within three days electronically. And so it was a lot easier. So I think that since they I want to say since we've gotten six, I'm sure they have more places like that. But the access itself has been very, very fruitful. I mean, they're everywhere, plenty of places to get tested, depending on what you want to be tested for, you know, whether it's a rapid or whether it's, you know, a full panel test.

Kit Heintzman 1:07:41

How are you feeling about [oh sorry] What are some of your hopes for a longer term future?

Shay Koloff 1:07:48

Well, some of my hopes would be to have a female president, a really good one, not Hillary. Because she's sneaky, but a lot of police, a lot of politicians are sneaky. So that's why I hate politics. You know, I'm a true being of like, just honesty. And so it feels like politics, for me are so hard because everything just feels like why. And what I would love though, is a female president. You know, more females in power, more equality, erases all races, all people of color. People of different ethnicities, different genders. Of course, luckily, the world is getting a lot more inclusive, we're becoming a lot more open to people and you know, their backgrounds and where they come from. And you know who they are. So my hopes, are, of course, that we keep moving in this direction. And that, you know, everyone can become, you know, accepted and become seen as people and not discriminated against based off of, you know, tiny little things like, you know, who you want to have sex with, or like what your hair looks like, or you know, what the color of your skin is, or whatever, it's just such trivial, tiny, stupid things to that should disappear. That would be my hope is those kinds of things would disappear. Other things that I would hope for is, you know, more safety in our schools. More more safety in our schools, but also better education in our schools. That would be a huge one. Because it does make me it does put me on a lie. It makes me Peter wanting to homeschool and not wanting to homeschool. I know my daughter needs interaction she needs to be around kids her age. She needs to be in school. But it is terrifying to think about, you know, most of the time our children are only learning so much right? So we still have to teach them things. And on top of that, obviously schools are clearly not always safe. And that can be difficult that can be terrifying. So that would be a very big help for me is that honestly that our entire just Our entire world would just become a lot more mindful, more intentional, more safe, but at the same time difficult to do that because people want their freedom. And people want their choices. So it's hard to make these. I mean, there's really no way to do that there's no way to make things safe without taking things away and pissing people off and just ruffling feathers. So my hope would be honestly, like, the biggest one of all transcendence would be the higher awakening of all human rights, I would love for everyone to just wake up and realize that this is a game, this is a test. It's a treadmill. of choices. And, and, and a lot of what is troubling, a lot of us now are just the social constructs that we were grown into. But that doesn't mean that life has to be that way. A lot of people are waking up and noticing, you know that you don't have to have, you know, a \$800,000 house, you don't have to have, you know, a \$50,000 car, your kids don't have to go to the best school or have the best clothes, you don't have to eat every single thing organic, you don't have to

get your hair done, or get your nails done as a salon every few weeks. These are things that social, socially, have been drilled into us. So we become consumers. And spending money. And the money and the greed have already dragged us down as a human race. So if we could just really like just go back to natural living and just living to survive living to be happy living to just know that you're home and taking care of your house and taking care of your kids, your family is happy. So just be happy with that. There's no need to be excessive. That would be my hope for the future. Because we're such an excessive race of people that we are going to kill this planet. The fact that we've made it this long as an actual dynasty of like, I forgot what exactly you call it. My husband calls it a is it a dynasty or something? I can't remember what he calls it.

Shay Koloff 1:12:24

No, basically, over time, all of the Imperial societies that have ever existed, have all crashed within a period of so many years, right. And so for our society, we have completely overshoot the timeframe of which most societies would collapse. We are at the brink of you know, when, anytime now anytime now this could all just, you know, fade into existence. So my hope would be honestly, yeah, people waking up and just realizing that money is not everything. And that, you know, it's not always about me, me, me, me, but it's about other people too. And like, we all share this world and it's okay to be nice.

Kit Heintzman 1:13:14

Who's been supporting you during the pandemic?

Shay Koloff 1:13:18

Oh, my husband has been a big supporter of me and my mom have both been really big pillars in my life, my husband, for sure. I have a lot of friends that I have been able to, you know, talk with and get to visit here and there when, you know, travel is open and available. I've been back home a couple times. So a lot of my support really just comes from my friends, my close family and I don't really have a lot of friends. But my family in general have been the bigger, bigger part of that. Just just my mom and my husband mainly.

Kit Heintzman 1:14:02

Would you share an example that shows sort of like, some of what that support has looked like?

Shay Koloff 1:14:09

Yeah, yeah, my, um, well for my husband, you know, he work a regular nine to five job. And I work for myself on self employed. But ever since I've, you know, taught him my idea of wanting to be self employed, he has always been super supportive. He has always been, you know, very, very much behind me in pushing me to create and go forward with my with my vision, even when, you know, I feel discouraged or even if I feel like I want to quit, he always tells me that I'm you know, closer to closer to the dream. Then farther away if I quit now, I'm only gonna put myself back at square one. Why do that? And so, it always kind of like sticks in my brain, like when he, you know, when he says stuff like that I'm just like, okay, yeah, that makes sense. You know, like, I can't just, you know, give up and start all over, because what would that do for me. But he's been a huge big supporter just in the mental aspect of constantly pushing me to just never give up mentally. And my mom has been a huge supporter physically with all kinds of things family, money, routine, survival, my mom is a huge pillar to my life, she, I moved down here in September of 2020, and my mom came down in June of 2021. So literally, like seven months later, she decided she was going to come down, and live here, you know, and being that my mom is in her 60s, you know, that's a really big change for someone who has never lived in a different place who has never been in a

diverse city, you know, for a long period of time, so I really was super thankful that my mom wanted to be close to me. And her move here made a huge difference in my mental health, like, just having her around helped me so much, that helped me propel my business forward, because I was able to then, you know, book shows into vending events. Because before I wouldn't have, you know, been able to have a babysitter or someone to watch my daughter or someone to, you know, assist me with, you know, making products or assisting me with setting up and things like that. So, my mom has been a big part of helping me get really, really stable in building my business, but also in family life, you know, whenever me and my husband has, you know, meet someone to do something last minute. Like we had, we had car troubles within the last like, three months. And my mom helped me with that so much by just letting me like, borrow her car for, you know, days on end, while we looked for another car, and things like that, so just having like a family member nearby that can help you in short times like that, in need is a huge game changer. So my mom has been a life changer, lifesaver. life changer too. But I have both, in many ways more than one. For sure, and then with my, with my friends, you know, I like I said, I have made a lot of really, really nice friends here. And a big example of just having community is, you know, anytime that you're never going to like anytime that you're going through life, you're never going to know what to expect, you may get in your car one day, and it may not start, you may, you know, go into your job one day and get fired. You may, you know, lose your wallet and have you know, no identification, no money. I mean, things can happen anytime, you know any day, and we're never really prepared for them. But having people around you that can be supportive, is a huge difference. And I've made even here some friends that I can, you know, really genuinely say like, you know, I could call them if I couldn't go and pick my daughter up from school and they would, you know, be able to go and pick her up for me like that's a huge blessing. Because before, you know, moving here, I didn't, I wouldn't have been able to do that. Just being able to have supportive people around me has made a huge difference.

Kit Heintzman 1:18:26

What are some of the ways you've been taking care of yourself?

Shay Koloff 1:18:31

I'm taking care of myself has been allowing myself to get into the things that I truly enjoyed as a child. So I got back into roller skating this last year started doing you know, just refreshing myself on roller skating. And then I even started learning new roller skaters dance moves, things like that. Call it jam skating. It's pretty cool. So that's been really fun just getting to do something that I used to love because I used to go roller skating all the time when I was a kid that was like my Sunday activity like my mom would just take me for hours and getting to do something like that for myself now is like my peace you know, I can go out for a couple of hours to the park state and just have you know, peace of mind. So that's something I like to do for myself. What else I really love reading books and I say reading books but it's really like scanning books. I have a ton of books that on like the same subject basically. And I just love to skim different books on different on the same subjects, just getting different reference points, things like that.

Shay Koloff 1:19:52

But a big one for me has been honestly allowing myself to be fearless, and allowing myself to live has been one of the biggest things for my self care before. Before the pandemic, like I said, I was very much afraid of making big changes, I would never, you know, I don't think I would have ever really, truly contemplated that we would have ever moved, you know, 700 miles away from where we live, I would have never expected that to really happen. I never would have taken the big leap to start doing vending shows, if I didn't, you know, just get the, the bravery in

me to do it. Because honestly, I'm terrible. Like, I'm just so terrified of people. Sometimes, even though I am a people person, I still inside, I'm always afraid that I'm gonna say the wrong thing, or that I'm always gonna, you know, I'm gonna mess up. And it can be very nerve wracking to be around others. So it has been very nice to just kind of be more fearless. And just say that, like, it's okay to like, be afraid, but also do it anyway. So that's been a huge thing for me, which has opened a lot of doors, you know, I've gotten a lot of really cool opportunities, I've met a lot of cool people, I've made a lot of great connections just by you know, not being afraid to do something that I usually I probably my old, my old self, probably wouldn't have done or you know, wouldn't have allowed to happen. Because I love to self sabotage myself. So, trying to not self sabotage as much.

Kit Heintzman 1:21:40

And coming to the end of the questions, and one of the last ones is, what do you think people in the social sciences and humanities should be helping us should be doing right now to help us understand that moment? So those are people in like literature departments, or sociology or poli sci or film studies?

Shay Koloff 1:22:01

What what should they be doing? To what?

Kit Heintzman 1:22:04

Help us understand the sort of human side of the pandemic?

Shay Koloff 1:22:09

Oh, um you know, gosh, I think definitely deepening the social studies, there needs to be more real studies of actual, like, the actual visualization of how the Earth is really going right now how the world is really going. Because I just don't think enough of us know, I don't or want to know, I think so many people love to live in blindness. And a lot of what most people's job should be, I think, when it comes to, you know, trying to open our eyes to like how, how people are actually living and what and what it really is like to be a person like in this in this world right now. We need to get more real. News real reporting real back to the people. Honestly, I don't even think this is like an actual like, I mean, it is kind of like a poli science question. But political science is kind of just, you know, it's, like I said, politics, I'm, I'm biased to, but in general, yes. Real reporting real, you know, real live news, I am making changes, if America was actually united and stood together against things that mattered, we would actually get change, instead of being divided. And that's what needs to be shown that needs to be seen people need to see more of people as people. And I think that there needs to be more of that shown in, like our research, and our demographics, like in our report, in society, I think a lot of it is mowed down dumbled down, it's not told how it really is. And that kind of puts a, like a, you know, a visor on the actual way that life really is. So I think that if we had more people in those departments, truly, truly able to break through and actually giving us like the real demographics of like, this is really what's going on. And this is how we can change it. But no, first we have to do this, this and this and actually doing it, you know, those are two different things, two or three completely different things. So that's how I feel about that, if that answers the question

Kit Heintzman 1:25:03

It does, what are some of the things you wished you've learned more about in history?

Shay Koloff 1:25:11

In history, oh. In history, I really wish I guess I would have learned a lot more about like real hist, like real history. Like real history that was not all rainbows and unicorns, or just, you know, the really bad stuff kind of dressed up in sheep's clothing to look nice. You know, it feels like a lot of what I learned like in, in my childhood, like through schooling, is a lot different than what I know now is like an adult. And so I guess I really just want I wish I just really would have known more about, like real, real life history events, not just the tiny things, but those are not just the big things, but the tiny things too, like, I just found out. Like three months ago, or six months ago or something, it wasn't too long ago, but basically, this year, I just found out this year about the the drought towns and like that there are hundreds of towns around America that were just completely drowned with water, and turned into manmade lakes. And I was kind of like, That's ridiculous. Like, that can't be true. And then you just do more research. And you're like, what, like, that's crazy. or different things like that. I mean, there's all kinds of stuff I could give as examples, but that's just one of them. And, yeah, I just, I wish, I wish I would have known about real real history as it really was, you know, not just like I said, the cookie cutter stuff. You know, we celebrate Thanksgiving, even though it's not really a celebration. Those kinds of things. So, yeah, just just just learning the real truth about history would have been nice. And actually been being incorporated into our real, our real teaching throughout our entire lives, learning about different cultures in history, like really like the diving into different cultures and what they believe and why they believe it would have been nice. I think that we definitely don't get enough of that, in our history teachings, you know, really learning about the different parts of the world and why they are the way they are and why people are the way they are, why they believe what they do, or different things like that. I think if we learned more about those things, while we were younger, while we were in school, we would have a lot less biases, a lot less hatred, a lot less confusion. Because they're taught, they're normalized, they're made to be part of our, you know, teaching. Which would make things better.

Kit Heintzman 1:28:17

If you could speak to some imagined historian in the future, someone at least far enough in the future that they have no lived experience of this pandemic, what would you tell them cannot be forgotten about our moment?

Shay Koloff 1:28:43

I would say to not forget that. That sickness is real. And that we should be definitely as people a lot more intentional. A lot more cautious, a lot more mindful about how we live about how we interact. I think many of us just, like I said, we live in oblivion, we're, you know, we throw our trash on the ground, we, we litter, we you know, pollute the murder, we still you know, we just do tons of things that are pretty, pretty terrible. But in general, we should just not forget that we should be more intentional about how we live, you know, be nice to people be cleanly you know, remember that it can only take one good cop, to your face. To be on life support. We should remember that. Just being just being cautious of others, like courteous in the word courteous of others, is what we definitely need to remember for sure if I could just put that all in like okay.

Kit Heintzman 1:30:04

I want to thank you so, so much for the generosity of your time and kindness and beauty of your answers. Those are all of the questions I know how to ask at this moment. But I'd like to just open up some spaces, there's anything you want to say about what the pandemic or the last few years more generally have been, like, for you, I'd love for you to have some space to say that.

Shay Koloff 1:30:29

Yeah, yeah, you know, I absolutely feel, in general, this entire thing has been a complete reset, it has been an eye opener and awakening for the entire world to remember that everything is only in this moment, only in this time that nothing is permanent, that everything has, you know, an expiration date. And it can be faster or slower, depending on what's going on around us. And we just need to be more thankful and more, you know, mindful of how we're living, because it can end at any time, it has put into her perspective for me, you know, to be just more, spend more time with my family be more grateful for the time that I get. Like I said, you know, reminding me of just being more, you know, cautious around others, you know, not, not always being so open to you know, handshakes or hugs or things like that. I mean, that sounds ridiculous, but you know, you just have to be more cautious about letting people touch you in this world. And that is in all aspects touching you as your physical body touching you as your as your conscious, like spiritual cells, touching you, as your essence, your entire aura, letting people touch you at all, is a complete and, and sacred thing. And, and that is including, you know, with thoughts and feelings and physical touch. So just putting that into perspective, it has completely for me, reset my entire mindset of just being a lot more thankful and grateful of my time on this earth and being more being more almost immersed in nature, actually being thankful for nature, I was volunteering as a gardener. Like I said, kind of before. Before all this happened, I was volunteering as a gardener back in 2017 2018, and did not really know the real value of what it was like to just volunteer rather garden just groping and the pandemic really pushed me in completely different places that I never thought I would be. And even as I'm saying that, you know, like I just spent today, like, mostly outside, like I did a gardening job this morning. Because I am a part time gardener that is technically my only job that I have, quote unquote, and I spent half of the day outside of somebody else's garden, you know, tending to their plants, making their yard look beautiful. And then I went home and decided, you know, today was the day I start my own yard project and spent time outside with my family, you know, pulling weeds making our, our home was beautiful. And it was something that in the back of my mind, you know, it just, it hits you like wow, like I never in a million years would have been a person who would have considered myself a gardener or a person who was considered myself enjoying nature or being outside or enjoying bugs or even, you know, five years ago, being near like, a bee would drive me crazy, I would probably run the opposite direction. But I have learned so much grace and so much appreciation for life. That now it's like being outside is like meditation, it's, it's, it's like love, I'm actually tending to the earth and really putting my intention and love into something that someone else is going to take care of. And that is like the biggest takeaway and positive and blessing out of all of this. Like I never would have seen myself being in this position or being a gardener or being a person who was into permaculture being a person who was into really caring about the planet. But that's the kind of takeaway that most people should, at this point, find something and be passionate about it and just live. Just enjoy being outdoors. Just enjoy being able to breathe and, and live and walk and explore. Because there's so many people who can't. So many people who can't see can't hear can't walk, don't have legs don't have arms. I mean And it just is a reminder every day how, how lucky I am that I am even capable of doing these things. And so that's my biggest takeaway. I'm just grateful, grateful to be alive, grateful to be capable, grateful to be privileged in my most black way, and the most blackest is to ways

Kit Heintzman 1:35:25

Thank you so much.

Shay Koloff 1:35:26

Thank you