

Sustainable Design Leader at HKS - Miranda Gardiner | Transcript

Introduction ([00:02](#)):

Welcome to Green Building Matters. The podcast that matters for green building professionals. Learn insight in green buildings. As we interview today's experts in LEED and well. We'll learn from their career paths, war stories and all things green because Green Building Matters and now our host and yes, he has every LEED and WELL credential. Here's Charlie Cichetti.

Charlie ([00:33](#)):

Be sure to check out the green building matters community where you can have unlimited exam prep for any of the professional credential exams. You're tackling next as well as putting your continuing education on autopilot, saving time with GPS reporting your hours on your behalf. Check it out. [Gbes.Com/Join](#). Now enjoy this episode of the green building matters podcast. Hey everybody. Welcome to the next episode of the green building matters podcast. I've got another LEED Fellow with us this week, and actually it's a newly minted LEED Fellow. I've got Miranda Gardiner come to us from the LA area. She's vice-president on the sustainable design side at HKS. How are you doing Miranda?

Miranda ([01:18](#)):

I'm great, Charlie. Thanks for having me today. I'm super excited to have this conversation and talk with you and congratulations to you as well. Also a newly-minted LEED Fellow, so wonderful news.

Charlie ([01:29](#)):

We've been doing this a long time and our paths probably crossed at some previous businesses. Here we are now, let's talk about you. Let's talk about that green building journey. The podcast is about that. It's a look back and then sometimes we're going to talk about what's in the future, but , where did you grow up and where'd, you kind of get your start. Where did you go to school?

Miranda ([01:47](#)):

I actually grew up all over the place. I am a native San Franciscan, which anyone in LA or in California in general will be like, how are you in LA now? Which maybe we'll get to afterwards. I am from San Francisco born and raised. I'm a native, but my father was an academic, so we lived in Iowa when we were kids and then he was a Fulbright professor and we lived in Germany as well. And then came back to California and sort of did high school here in California and then took off when I was 17. My parents always knew I wasn't going to stay put for very long just partially because of my upbringing and partially because I've always been pretty independent. Went to undergraduate in Washington, DC, went to graduate school in Philadelphia and sort of hasn't stopped since then. I have really traveled the globe thanks to work and just different projects and opportunities that have come my way. I think for anybody is a wonderful education in and of itself to understand and see and meet people across the globe, understand different cultures and learn how to work and live in those scenarios that are not what you're used to or familiar with

Charlie ([03:02](#)):

Absolutely, some of that time in Germany did that have some influence on you? Maybe even sustainability?

Miranda ([03:09](#)):

Absolutely. Anyone who has been in Germany as a kid or has had a child while they've been in Germany realized that the value, the Germans, and I think in general, the Europeans placed on that access to nature and that environment of being in the forest, understanding, trees and flowers and what it means to be part of mother nature. They have garden homes over there. You go on very long hikes, even as a seven year old to really see no bugs and dirt and get your hands dirty. And so as a child, that was always part of it. Plus, when I was living there, there still weren't as many environmental regulations. There were clear memories of Berlin being covered in smog and air quality, being just terrible in some of the big cities in the area. When I went back as a Bosch Fellow in 2015 and 2016 to see that shift and to see Germany really being at the forefront of sustainability, environmental activism, what a wonderful transition that they've made as a country and really setting the stage for others to follow that it is possible.

Miranda ([04:27](#)):

I mean, we see it here too in the US. You look back at photos of LA or Pittsburgh or any number of big cities. Air quality blows your mind that we ever lived that way. But yes, to your question, being in Germany, again, especially as a kid, I couldn't have asked for something more wonderful,

Charlie ([04:48](#)):

Amazing. Yeah. A couple of years ago I was fortunate to go to Greenbuild Europe and it was in Berlin and I just really fell in love with it. It was great. I mean, just the green space on the Riverside and you really can see two types of architecture too, and just the division, but you're right. It's over the top, but the green buildings are pretty amazing. I've got to follow up and just ask a little bit, okay. You come back to the States, get the undergrad, but tell us about that undergrad and then when did you decide to maybe become an architect? So walk us through that decision.

Miranda ([05:19](#)):

It actually was before I went to undergrad, I went to a tech arts high school in San Francisco, Lick-Wilmerding High School, where the endowment is actually in the technical arts. So alongside all of your general education study requirements, you are mandated to take all three shops. So, wood, metal, and machine shop your freshman year of high school and then your sophomore year, you have two semesters where you focus on a technical art specialty. So furniture making or stained glass. I took jewelry design. There were any number of ways you could do that. Plus you have to take drafting and design and to date myself, this was when AutoCAD still had the mouse pad that you use to click your commands for architecture, and you still had to load each of your inks into the plotter in the right line weight when you were printing things.

Miranda ([06:09](#)):

So I was really engaged with it at that time, and I took drafting and design, and then I took the intro to architecture studies and then actually did my senior project again, part of that endowment for that school to do a senior project. I actually entered my first AIA competition. It was for high school students to design a digital arts facility, my friend and I were the two that entered that year. He actually won the competition and I was awarded an honorable mention and the comment that stuck out to me was that while the

design was really beautiful, I didn't show my site and I didn't utilize the context of where the building was going to go in my design. And so ever since then, it has kind of been a driving force of you can't do this in isolation. There are so many other factors, whether it's the human element or the nature of the place, or again, the actual direct location.

Miranda ([07:06](#)):

This was a pier into San Francisco on the Bay. What does that mean for how your building needs to respond and interact with it? So I actually put architecture on the back burner. I still have the hunch, whether it's true or not, that my architecture teacher from high school was a little bit miffed that I had done that at that point and about three years into college, I went in as a German major and then went into English literature. I started taking art classes and I talked to my art professor at the time and he said, well, if you really want to go into architecture you better show them, you can draw. And so he just loaded me up with drawing classes, print, making digital art. He was like, here we go. Let's build out this portfolio. I ultimately did my graduate work in architecture.

Charlie ([07:52](#)):

That feedback sounds like you'll never forget there. That's so cool. At what point in the career, Miranda, did you really know you're going to work in sustainability? You're like, okay, this green building thing I want to do that.

Miranda ([08:06](#)):

I think there was always a driving force. I remember going to recycling facilities as a kid and sorting all the glass. Again, one of my other projects in high school was designing sort of modular housing that I considered would be kind of maybe low income or for students where it really took advantage of shared spaces, but you also had your individual smaller home units. So there was something going on inside from a pretty early age that this was kind of the focus. When I got out of graduate school, I went to work at a historic preservation firm and I loved it. Such a wonderful experience to see how buildings transform. But the question that was nagging me was like, why aren't these projects going after LEED or really talking about sustainability because you have an existing building. You're also in historic preservation of clients that usually have quite a bit of funding to do this

because they are matching a color or a material palette from the past to enhance the beauty of these preserved buildings. And yet none of that was coming up and so it was really only a year in after graduate school that I said, "I gotta get somewhere" and got engaged in the sustainability conversation and actually went and worked at US Green Building Council on staff in 2007.

Charlie ([09:31](#)):

That's really cool. Tell us more about that career path. What were some of the different positions you've held and kind of pieced together? How did you go from a couple of different cities and ended up back in California? So tell us a little more of that timeline.

Miranda ([09:44](#)):

So yeah, after graduate school, I came back to San Francisco, came back to California, actually ended up being kind of miserable being in San Francisco. I don't know what it was. I think sometimes in my mind, everyone has the small town they grew up in. Sometimes it happens to be a big city like San Francisco. Sometimes it happens to be like where my father's from, Potsdam in upstate New York, but it's almost a weird familiarity that if you are very independent, can feel a little stifling. I went back to DC and worked at USGBC for a number of years, first in actual certification reviews before they were external and third party, they were internal. We did a lot of them and then switched over the technical development team with Brendan Owens and just learned so much from him.

Miranda ([10:35](#)):

He's an engineer and so to be in that space with somebody who sort of speaks the same language, but kind of a different accent or a different dialogue from the architect was wonderful and that was the time when we had launched the 2009 rating system and we were starting to build out the version four. We were launching LEED for health care. That was a project that I helped launch, like pretty much 24 hours before my last day at USGBC, we launched the pilot credit library at that time. That was also right when Greenbuild really blew up. I don't know if you remember that. I think it was 2008, maybe 2007, when the onsite registration at Greenbuild, all of a sudden there were 30,000 attendees at Greenbuild and it was madness

because Bill Clinton was speaking and clearly they had hit on something that was important to designers and to the world.

Miranda ([11:29](#)):

To see USGBC just take off. What a thrilling time to be there and to work with all of those colleagues who were there, Kimberly Lewis and Kate Hurst they worked through Greenbuild and all the logistics and how that team just, education-wise and speaker wise, I mean, you name it, people were there. A lot of my colleagues now too, or former colleagues know, they are now back in the architecture zone or they're at Google or they're working through how to decarb the world. To see their trajectories is really fun too. So then I went into the private sector. I continued working with engineers. I worked at Buro Happold for a bit in New York. It was around the time there was a bit of an economic downturn.

Miranda ([12:13](#)):

I had the opportunity to go work in the Middle East and Abu Dhabi at the urban planning council there and help them build out their specific city specific rating system, Estadaad, and then came back. And one of my colleagues there was Canadian and Turkish and he called me and he said, "Hey, you looking for a new opportunity, I'm back in Canada and wondering if you'd love to come work at Stantec with me." And so I went to Stantec for a number of years in Vancouver, which I highly recommend if anyone gets a chance to work in Canada, it's really beautiful. Again, similar to working in the US but different when it comes to that work-life balance. It was a time where my bosses one year allowed me the opportunity to take a month off and travel. I went to New Zealand and Australia and Fiji, just again, learning and understanding, how different countries, different companies approach their sustainability tactics was just such an education for me.

Miranda ([13:16](#)):

And then ended up going back to Germany for a year out of fellowship working at a bank or a financial institution. And then in the city in Hamburg, again, still focused on sustainability and learning what it looked like for green bonds, different loans, different ways they were financing these projects. And then at the time too, it was 2015, 2016 when they had an immigration crisis, how do you continue to push your sustainability agenda

when receiving, tens of thousands of people coming into the country who need housing, who need healthcare, who need education and not just putting them in a corner outside of a city, but really from the social sustainability component, integrating them into German society and culture.

Charlie ([14:05](#)):

You have really worked for some really cool companies and all over. You're right. It's a blend of all those experiences. If you look back a little bit, who opened some doors for you, who might you consider a mentor along the way? You were in the early, early days of USGBC. You mentioned Brendan, great guy there, but who else had some influence along the way?

Miranda ([14:27](#)):

I would go back all the way to elementary school. I went to what some people would consider sort of a tree hugging hippie elementary school. It was actually, I recently saw this. The charter was founded. It was founded, I think in 1918 and it was founded on the premise that schools should be open air for healthy students and healthy teachers because they were coming out of a pandemic and how do you bring students back into a school? Well, here we go, let's take down the walls and have open windows and have daylight. All of these things that we talk about now, a hundred years later, they founded the school on. We talked to our teachers, we called them by their first names, but the majority of teachers were female, which is very inspiring to be kind of led and taught by strong female leadership.

Miranda ([15:19](#)):

All of them, Susan Andrews was the director of the school at the time. But I can't thank any or all of them enough for what they did for me in terms of teaching me. I still remember science lessons from them. I still remember gender conversations that we had. I still remember how you shake somebody's hand correctly when you're meeting them to really be confident and make eye contact and do these. I mean, we were 10 at the time when they were teaching us these things. So it goes back a long way. And then of course my high school architecture teacher, Goranka Poljak-Hoy, was just such an inspiration. She's still there teaching future generations of architects in high school. So again, another person, another strong woman in my life who gave me a lot of perspective and kudos, but quite frankly, and maybe in

the sense cheesy, but my parents are just the most inspiring people I think I've ever met.

Miranda ([16:18](#)):

My father is what I would consider a tried and true feminist in supporting his daughters and what they do, but he coaches and the support that he has for female runners, for his staff that he hires, just amazing. My mother and father grew up in very different places. My dad grew up in upstate New York. Protestant, grandparents and parents are German and English. My mother grew up in San Francisco, was born and raised in the Haight, Ashbury, her parents, she's Mexican, Mexican, Catholic. It's like how these two people got together and made things work for the last 40 some years is still a question I ask them often, but to grow up in that environment where you really are experiencing quite the mix, I think also led me to all of what I talked about before the kind of travel and the learning and being open to new experiences.

Charlie ([17:13](#)):

Well, it definitely sounds like you've had the right people in your corner. It's just so important for that encouragement literally, and every step of the way. So that's really cool. You took us there. Let's talk about what's on the highlight reel. What are some of your proudest accomplishments? What stands out?

Miranda ([17:31](#)):

Where do I start? I mean, I'm very proud of all of the LEED certification projects I've done because there are so many teams and building owners and subcontractors down to administrative staff who've to get those projects through the door and certified. To think back to some of the really challenging conversations where people didn't want to do this, or there was no way we were going to figure this one out and get it certified to work through that with all those teams. One of the examples for me that always sticks out is a project they had in Canada. I won't name names or name the project, but the head contractor told me, Miranda, there's no way I'm going to get construction, waste management to 50% diverted, which I feel like any of us in the green building industry would be like, really 50%.

Miranda ([18:25](#)):

You can't divert this from the landfill. And he said, the only way I'm going to do this, or be able to do this, if I sit out there with a shotgun and I kind of looked at him and I just said, I was like, okay, so do you have some shotguns on hand? Like, do we need to go sit out there with this? And he didn't know that I was being sort of being serious with him. We started laughing a little bit. And then he came back with a catalog for guns, which I am not in favor of owning guns, but he sort of, it sort of broke the ice of like, I am really serious about doing this. You tell me what it's going to take and let's do this. We did not need to get out shotguns and they did divert way more than 50% from landfill. He was just sort of I think testing me to see where the line was and I just kept pushing the line back on it. We had a good laugh and we always laughed about it after and that project went on to be successful. So those difficult conversations and those kinds of pushes forward have always been kind of top of my mind to remember that even in the kind of darkest moments, there is a way through this and we will find it and we will connect with those people to ensure that not only did we convince them of their project, but we convinced them that what we're doing is really going to be beneficial for the future of our work. And for the future of us as a species.

Charlie ([19:45](#)):

It's tough conversations and you're right don't ask questions like, can we do this because that's easy, no, it's, how can we do this? It sounds like you got there with the superintendent and that project is really cool. LEED Fellow, let's talk about that for a minute. Greenbuild was very recent and congrats, it's a huge deal. It's this high honor and what does that mean for you?

Miranda ([20:08](#)):

I mean, first off it's very emotional for me because so many people who have received this honor in the past were professors of mine or bosses of mine. Rand Ekman is our CSO here at HKS and Randy and I have known each other probably about 10-15 years now. To sort of be in that kind of honored position with him is just very moving. My former professor from graduate school Muscoe Martin who passed away a number of years ago is a LEED Fellow. And so to feel like what he was teaching me in graduate school now still resonates with my career. Again, it was when I first heard this, I was very kind of moved and felt like I was honoring the people before me who had

made sure that I was moving the buck forward when it came to sustainability.

Miranda ([21:02](#)):

There was some of that in terms of that award. I think the other thing too, which was really wonderful and powerful is the number of friends and colleagues and people I've known through the years, whether it's I met them once at a conference, or I worked with them at USGBC, or at another organization who reached out and were just like, I'm so proud of you. This is so wonderful. And for me to feel like I could say, no, thank you because I wouldn't be here without you. Whether it, again, it was a hard conversation. Like the one we just talked about or you brought me coffee one morning or you gave me that job, or we worked together to go on a run one day when neither of us wanted to go for a run and we just needed the stress release. It's very true. What they say about it takes a village. It really does. And so to me this honor is for everyone in my life, who's helped me get here, not just my own accomplishments.

Charlie ([22:00](#)):

Congrats. Well-worded, I would echo the same to those in my corner. Let's talk about today. What's keeping you busy today. Tell us HKS, a large design firm with over a thousand employees, 27 plus locations. You're in LA. Tell us about what's keeping you busy today.

Miranda ([22:19](#)):

What's not keeping us busy, Charlie, right! I mean, HKS is such a diverse portfolio and really part of the enticement for me to come work here again, besides the design green team and besides working with Rand, the talent pool here in terms of the professionals I get to work with because our team really is a firm-wide resource. I work with people in San Francisco. I work with our team in London. I work with our team in Atlanta. Like we work all over the place. And again, like my counterparts who are in Atlanta or Denver or Chicago or DC, same thing, they might work with our Shanghai office. So for me, that was very encouraging to come start here. And I get to work with them weekly.

Miranda ([23:08](#)):

So I get to engage with the design green team and what we're all working on, whether it's materials, health, whether it's carbon reduction, whether it's hearing about the energy models and our DDX inputs or certifications, all of that kind of comes full circle. Those dialogues on working on projects anywhere from stuff at higher ed. So at UC San Diego, we have two big live learn neighborhood projects we're working on, and those are five and six buildings. Each, both pursuing LEED. One of them is also pursuing Park Smart and working through with our very engaged client on what does that mean for our design elements? What does that mean for opportunities with our design elements, whether it's bird safety, glass, or using organic waste to produce. One of the projects has us using organic waste as a fuel source for courtyard barbecues, for students to be part of their community interactions in the courtyards.

Miranda ([24:10](#)):

They get to go and do that. I guess probably not right now is they're being mindful of quarantining. I've worked on projects, Australia, Rod Laver Arena. We helped certify that LEED silver earlier this year, I am working on some health care projects with Indian Health Services. And so that's tied to federal funding what that looks like for the sustainability elements. So to work within those confines is also a kind of a new challenge for me. We're working through with a couple of our clients, how they look at something like Fitwell for their portfolio of buildings. What does that mean? So using other rating systems, as a mechanism to enhance sustainable features and wellness features in their spaces, and then of course, opening up and helping facilitate a lot of the dialogues that we're having right now, in some part, thanks to 2020. The conversations that have to come up, dismantling systemic racism, looking at community engagement, looking at how our building designs are much more holistic than just quote unquote sustainability in the lens of the built environment.

Miranda ([25:18](#)):

But sustainability, when we talk about where things are coming from, what are the economic impacts on our neighbors. Not just ourselves. What are we looking at when it comes to our firm, walking the talk when it comes to again, diversity, when it comes to inclusion, when it comes to equity. So helping kind of talk about those things, because I think, again, a lot of us in

sustainability have been like, yes, this is what we wanted to talk to you about. We wanted to talk to you more and more about health and wellness. Why certain buildings are designed a certain way because you don't have someone in the room who is maybe in a wheelchair or maybe who has vision problems and can't see the way you see, let's talk about these design elements as we move forward. So that has really been kind of a highlight of 2020. It's like getting those phone calls and asking about those elements that those of us focused on have been focused on it for a long time.

Charlie ([26:16](#)):

You are working on the right things. So you are busy and that's a pretty amazing list I can tell. You got a lot of energy towards all this. And I think you're in a really good place there. Some amazing projects and everyone checks out some of the HKS portfolio from the stadiums to the huge buildings, to a lot of their own health care side. You mentioned. So let's talk a little bit about that healthy building movement. You said FIT Well, it looks like some clients are picking that up with you across portfolios. What else would you add about how you're navigating the healthy building movement right now, and building some confidence back as we try to get back to our buildings?

Miranda ([26:54](#)):

Absolutely. I give a lot of credit to our internal research team working through that. What does that mean for Day X re-entry? What does that look like when you have a pandemic on your hands and you do work in the built environment. So they have been doing a lot of work that we've been starting to tap into when we've talked to existing clients and new clients. The majority of that is in their court. Dr. Upali Nanda, our head of research I can't say enough about her and the work that her team does, not only in research articles, but also being able to take that research and apply it. We really are seeing people have these conversations and come to us, not only with Fitwell, but with WELL certification. And some of what we did previously to this was we went into our own offices, our New York office or Miami office, our Chicago office, analyzed them and started pushing these kinds of criteria forward to certify our own offices in this space.

Miranda ([27:58](#)):

So it wasn't just, Hey, you should do this. We had an internal focus of we're going to do this too, and show you why this is helpful for productivity of our employees, why this is meaningful to how they come to work, how they engage with their colleagues, how they deliver on their projects and talk about this. Then with clients, once you've experienced a healthy building, it's hard to sit in a meeting and say, 'Oh yeah, I'm going to agree with you. You shouldn't have to do this.' You know what it's like, how much better you function and operate when you are in those spaces.

Charlie ([28:34](#)):

You just feel better in a place like that. You feel better when you eat healthy food. Let's talk about the future. Let's pretend we had a crystal ball. What do you spend some time reading up on different things? What do you think is around the corner and this green building movement?

Miranda ([28:52](#)):

That's a hard question given this year and how much we've seen just transpire. I almost feel like, and I know people don't want to hear that. I almost feel like we're going to sort of see a very similar rollercoaster in 2021, but that said, I think what we've realized, and I say, we, as, as a general, the globe is that our own behavior, our own action really does have an impact on someone across the world and to get out and vote or to get out and protest, or to again, get up and say, no, this building is going to have sustainability features really does make a difference. While we know big corporations have a larger stake in what that means for the future, I think I've seen more and more people get up and stand up and sort of voice their concern.

Miranda ([29:50](#)):

No, this is not okay. No, it is not acceptable for us to only have males in leadership or only have people who are white at the table or only have projects that perform the bare minimum when it comes to sustainability goals. Then the number of Zooms, the number of meetings I've been on this year, where the hand has been raised, the question has been asked, Hey, what are you doing to change some of these norms is probably 95, if not a hundred percent of those calls. For me, the future is this is now going to switch from a conversation really into action. We are really not going to see

kind of going back to normal as being okay. We are going to see a very new normal moving forward and it doesn't have to cost us a lot in that way.

Miranda ([30:41](#)):

We're going to spread it out. We're going to make sure that everyone is part of moving this forward. Everyone is part of making a change. Everyone is coming together and healing and seeing what that means. To your point, just now eating healthier. That's one of them. Understanding that you can't be on Zoom calls 24 hours out of the day, but you do need to be in a healthy space. We've got to balance that again. We've got to balance a lot of the inequities have really been brought forward that have always been there, but now you can't ignore them. You can't unsee them. We've got to change this. We've got to shift our designs. We've got to shift our policies. We've got to shift our government makeup. We've already seen that in this past historic election, but the election of California, native Kamala Harris in the vice presidential role. So to me, the future is something I can't even predict because I think it's going to be more amazing than anything I can say to you right now.

Charlie ([31:41](#)):

The best is yet to come, as they say, and you're right, there's just a lot of momentum even in this crazy year. We've got to get past the pandemic and let some other things really fall into place. Thank you. I like it and I love your energy. Let's talk a little bit about you. Some rapid fire questions here.

Miranda, what's your specialty or gifts?

Miranda ([32:03](#)):

My superpower is that I have been told that my superpower is communication and reading people and talking to them. My parents friend one time said that to me, I asked him, I was like, 'Hey, are my parents still the people you knew 20 years ago?' And they were like, Yeah, of course they are like, your parents. They're the same people. And they said, but what's frightening and amazing to me is to see you because as a child, you were able to kind of connect and read people and be a part of a dialogue well beyond your years, that's really disarming as an adult to see that in a kid, she said, but to see you now use that really well in your professional career, in your personal life is amazing to see. And I do like it. I do get commented

on a number of times when people say things like, well, it was the comment someone made. It's like some article about it takes people X amount of hours and days to realize if you want to be friends with somebody. And then the person said to me, and they were like, or in Miranda's case about 30 seconds.

Charlie ([33:09](#)):

Well, that's awesome. It's funny. You are a great communicator. I mean, I can tell this and just like everything we've been talking about, so let's talk about bucket lists. I'm a fan of the bucket list. What are one or two things maybe on your bucket list?

Miranda ([33:25](#)):

Professionally on my bucket list would be that everyone in my firm, or maybe even bigger goal everyone in the kind of built environment profession. So architects, landscape designers, contractors, building owners, engineers, you name it. They are all part of the sustainability conversation. I think it was Rick Fedrizzi who told me my first year at USGBC, we were there like late at night or on a weekend or something. I can't remember. He said this. He said, 'if we are doing our job correctly, we will be out of a job in the next decade because it will just be part of what we do and not this need to kind of bring your quote unquote sustainability expert in.' And that still resonates with me. It's been about a decade, but I think where he was going with that was is it's just part of the norm. Just like we know that a wall is a wall and a roof is a roof. We know that this is a sustainable design and that's what we're doing with it. So that's my big, hairy goal down the line for the future. I think the other bucket list item for me is probably selfishly being able to travel again and get to Japan and get into South America. But to see some of that would be amazing.

Charlie ([34:42](#)):

Yeah. I know the Olympics got pushed off and just got back to you, you've been to a lot of places, but it sounds like you really like to stamp the passports some more so thanks for taking us there. Let's talk a little bit about learning and books. I'm not sure if you like to pick up a book and hold it in your hands, maybe you listen to audible or maybe you listen to

podcasts. I don't know. Is there a book or two you'd recommend? It doesn't even have to be industry specific, just a book or two.

Miranda ([35:09](#)):

It's it's funny because I just got two books today for my holiday reading list and partially because I came out of Greenbuild hearing about these. So I'm super excited to read, Lo-tech design by radical indigenous wisdom by Julia Watson who was one of the opening keynote at Greenbuild just a wonderful presenter. And when she mentioned that I wrote it down and of course right away ordered that. So I'm thrilled to read that I am sort of in the middle of reading River of Doubt about Teddy Roosevelt, I'm going to get my presidents correct here, Teddy Roosevelt and his adventures into Yellowstone and sort of what that meant for him politically, too. I mean, sort of the first one of the first public conservationists, helpful in establishing our national parks. What does that mean when he used to go out into Yellowstone for like months at a time during his presidency and like explore them. So I'm sort of just at the start of that. And I'm really excited and interested to hear that kind of experiences that he had and how we may see that or how I might see that now looking at the context of his, his legacy in politics

Charlie ([36:26](#)):

I will have to check that out. I read Teddy Roosevelt's autobiography. That's good stuff. So I'm going to check that out. We're going to put a link to these books and the podcast show notes for everyone listening. All right. Let's let's bring it home here. Two questions as we come to a close Miranda, just the first one. What's one piece of career advice you wish you had known a little earlier in your career?

Miranda ([36:45](#)):

So right after college, I opted not to go into a standard nine to five Shabbos. Like I just, I feel like I've been on this wheel for a long time. I'm going to explore some other jobs. I worked marketing kind of what's it called, like grassroots marketing for red bull because red bull wasn't big at the time. I was a dance and tumbling instructor for two to five-year-olds. I also worked as a bartender and a shooter girl in DC and one time I was working actually at the bar and one of my kind of regular customers came up to me and he

said what's wrong? Why aren't you going and talking to those people over there? Why aren't you talking to that group? You kind of have your eyes down, what's going on? And I said, well, what if I go over and they say no. And he says, well, what if they say no? And I said, well it would be embarrassing or I'd have to walk away. And he goes, "and." I said, well, then I have to go find someone else. And he goes, "and." He just walked me through this thing of like, no is one, not the end of it, but two, if they say no, where you stand and move on. And so it was kind of this, you know, it was in a sort of specific let's sell them a drink, such a scenario. But I still think about that now too. Sometimes when somebody says no to you, okay, well, is there a way to get around the no or is it okay, this is the answer. Let's try someone else. I still think about that person and that comment to me, make the eye contact, go approach them. The worst that could happen is they say no, because they might say yes.

Charlie ([38:17](#)):

Yeah, you're a great storyteller. I'm picturing that. That's a good time. Let's say there's someone listening right now and they're jumping into the green building movement right now. You've been doing this awhile I've been doing this while, but let's just say they're making that career change. Or maybe it's a young professional. What words of encouragement do you have for them as they get into the green building movement?

Miranda ([38:37](#)):

Great question. Don't don't box yourself in. We talk about thinking creatively. We talk about thinking holistically, but sometimes when it comes to our careers, I have to work in an architecture firm because I'm trained as an architect. I have to work for an engineer because I have an engineering license. I don't think that's really needed to be the case. I think from my own personal experience, but also just from seeing other people's resumes or talking to younger professionals coming in right now maybe there is a community group that needs your help in terms of establishing their sustainability goals because they don't have a lot of money, but they want to make sure that they're doing this right. You can come in and talk to them about picking the right paint, not going off gas and sort of be toxic in their space.

Miranda ([39:27](#)):

That little piece of information that you're able to share with them can make a world of difference to their project and now you're part of this community. Now your social sustainability value has gone up that you can think about things like furniture making, or you can think about things like policy, a good friend of mine, Robin works at the city of West Hollywood, what she has done with that sustainability program and the stretch codes that they've started to put into play is just amazing. And she's not a policy person in terms of per se, like she has a background similar to ours and was at USGBC for a long time and now she's making changes in our local government. You have people who are on boards of directors, you have people on volunteer committees, you have people going out and supporting gardening efforts.

Miranda ([40:17](#)):

You have people who speak different languages and translate signage into languages. We're talking about this with some of our education and healthcare clients, you don't always have patients or students or students, families that English is their first language. How wonderful would it be for them to understand what you've done? Because it's now in Spanish or Chinese or Tagalog or German or whatever sign language, you have a video of someone doing this in sign language, all of these things go under this umbrella sustainability and sort of keep thinking outside the box, thinking of ways to bring more people into the conversations is so important and so valid because otherwise we get into a vicious circle of someone said, no, and now it's on the back burner versus again, what we've been talking about today, find that way around it, find a different approach, find a different person, find a different mechanism to get your story across and to get them to come to the table and feel empowered and engaged and want to move the buck forward too.

Charlie ([41:18](#)):

Wow. I am pumped up. What a fun conversation. I hope everyone enjoyed this. Let's just thank Miranda. Connect with her on LinkedIn and Miranda, Thank you. I've really enjoyed our talk. Fantastic.

Miranda ([41:34](#)):

Thank you very much for having me. It was wonderful to chat with you and again, I really appreciate the offer and yes, please shoot me a note on LinkedIn.

Charlie ([41:45](#)):

I want to say thank you to our loyal listeners. We actually are celebrating over one year here on the green building matters podcast. Me and the entire team were stoked. And just so glad you continue to listen every Wednesday morning to a new interview with a green building professional here in this industry, or just some pro tips that we want to make sure that you are getting straight from us straight to you. Thank you for listening to this episode of the green building matters projects@gbs.com. Our mission is to advance the green building movement through best in class education and encouragement. Remember, you can go to gbes.com/podcast for any notes and the links that we mentioned in today's episode, and you can actually see the other episodes that have already been recorded with our amazing, yes. Please tell your friends about this podcast, tell your colleagues, and if you really enjoyed it, leave a positive review on iTunes. Thank you so much. And we'll see you on next week's episode.