

B*tch I Got 3 Degrees! | TIS E. 49 transcript

Lisa 00:06

Welcome to the introvert sisters, the podcast by introverts for introverts hosted by Sharon and Lisa, two INFJs with a lot to see.

Sharon 00:17

Hi, I'm Sharon and I'm Lisa and together we're the introvert sisters. Welcome to our podcast. This is a special episode for us because we are welcoming a very special guest. Stacey Alvarez de la Campa is the founder of Worldwide Sustainability Warriors and an educational consultant at One Ocean Hub, University of Strathclyde. She's also the anti money laundering administrator at LEX Caribbean Attorneys at Law. She holds a degree in Danish language and literature, a BA in English Lit and a Bachelor of Laws. So welcome to our very busy, very degreed, absolutely inspiring longtime friend, Stacey Alvarez de la Campa. I have known Stacey for a long time we actually met when a mutual friend of ours was doing personal training. That's how we met and we, you know, got along... several years ago now, we won't say how many. But you know, and that's um, you know, we've been in touch ever since we have worked together we have played together.

Lisa 01:32

and your baby sister. We have also adopted each other.

Sharon 01:38

So welcome. Welcome to the podcast. Stacey. We're so happy to have you here.

Stacey Alvarez 01:41

Thank you. I'm so I've had a stupid wicked grin on my face since yesterday. Looking forward to this.

Lisa 01:49

Wonderful, wonderful. Okay, so we're going to dive in with the the first question, we're going to get into the meat of the matter. We're first, since this is the introvert sisters. First question is, do you consider yourself to be introverted or extroverted?

Stacey Alvarez 02:04

Definitely introverted. I am indeed an introvert. So I feel I'm in good company.

Lisa 02:10

And have you always known that you're an introvert or,

Stacey Alvarez 02:15

I have always suspected in that I knew that there tend to be these supposedly opposite ends of the spectrum, introvert and extrovert, right. And I knew I definitely didn't fall on the extrovert side. But there were still elements of my personality that people tagged me as being an extrovert. But I knew for example, from the fact that I do need to recharge, because even this holiday season, I know that the

next couple of days, I'm going to have to just kind of be on my own for as possible, and take a breather from the expectations of social interaction. And I know, that is something that definitely pegs anything.

Sharon 02:50

We feel you there.

Lisa 02:52

I am there. I'm there right now. Okay. All right. So having got that out of the way, let's dive into ... I'm going to throw this over to you Sis.

Sharon 03:01

So when we got together recently, we were chatting as girlfriends blog women do. Yeah. And at one point, you explained, "why are you simplifying this? Bitch, I have three degrees!" And we all immediately said that would make a great episode. Yeah. And here we are, we are so so for the benefit of our listeners. Can you share the context around your statement? And the why behind your indignation?

Stacey Alvarez 03:23

Yes, well,, this came out of a conversation with my ex husband. And one of the reasons he is indeed an ex husband, was that expectation that I should dim my light. I was somehow it was a surprise that I was as educated as I was, and the eternal quest to really demean. Well simplify things in a way that was patently demeaning to me in terms of either explaining me explaining me to friends explaining why I was around as if you know what I didn't WHY DID YOU JUST authentically Yeah, why do I have to be explained? Exactly. So one point is to break something down in a way that was so simple, I could feel that the mask was just ripped off my face, and I shouted "bitch, I have three degrees" I didn't mean it to be, you know, in any way demeaning towards him, but it's really just about

Sharon 04:15

we've had those experiences, haven't we? I mean, I know we, you know, tell the story of the the people at one of your former workplaces and

Lisa 04:25

Which story. There are so many

Sharon 04:28

of the masters.

Lisa 04:31

Oh, that story. That job that will not be named but.... Yes. Me and a bunch of other colleagues. We're in conversation. I don't remember exactly about what but obviously, somehow the subject of education came up. And I said maybe the opening of my sentence was, oh, well when I did my masters and you know, whatever else followed right, and the person of no color The person next to me, literally, their face turned bright red. Sort of, you know, head whipped around towards me and said, it said, What did

you say? I said, Oh, well, you know, when I did my master's, you know, Madras XYZ was my experience. And that was that I was told "you have a master's?"

Stacey Alvarez 05:22

And there's the tone, it's the tone,

Lisa 05:25

it's the tone, it is the because behind that tone is the expectation that you're not supposed to. Yeah. And I thought Listen, honestly speaking, if I could have got through in the world without having any degree. I got educated because you know, it was expected and you know, we all know we have to do more, work harder. There's that, right. But so I throw no shade or anybody that does not have a degree, it is not always required, depending on what your job is. us and what we do and the circles that we move in it is absolutely required.

Lisa 05:57

And so I expect you to respect my degrees

Sharon 06:02

[muffled] This room. This is a room full of degrees. In this circle here. We got eight degrees between us, and a handful of certificates.

Stacey Alvarez 06:31

Yes. Anti money laundering. Yeah, environmental. Yeah,

Sharon 06:35

exactly. Yeah. You know, those are, you know, those are only you know, those are only the main things. Yeah, that's, you know, constantly getting qualifications and other things. Do you not have also a certificate in social media?

Lisa 06:46

Social media marketing. All kinds of stuff.

Stacey Alvarez 06:48

Yeah, love that.

Sharon 06:51

You know, as Black women, especially as Caribbean women coming out of the era that we come out of, a certain amount of education was expected and encouraged, highly encouraged.

Lisa 07:04

Yeah, there was no choice.

Sharon 07:07

And so, you know, it's very strange when you come across these non melanated people that have these low expectations of you.

Stacey Alvarez 07:17

Very good point about the low expectations, and not just the low expectations, but also the inability to cope with the fact that we evolve. So we're not going to be static, we're going to evolve, we're going to craft our futures, we're going to craft our destinies and to do that you pursue your passion. Yeah. We evolve. So we're multifaceted. We ... that's that's part and parcel of it.

Stacey Alvarez 07:24

we are you know, and so, the surprise the surprise is the hurtful thing the you know, the swivel head, right

Stacey Alvarez 07:47

the whiplash

Lisa 07:51

because, of course, it means that they have put you mentally without necessarily even realizing it, because in sort of day to day commerce and discussion among colleagues, you might not even realize that they think less of you until something like this comes up. That's a very good point, right? social niceties. Keep keep the wheels turning

Sharon 08:11

You have an experience to share? You're looking like you do.

Stacey Alvarez 08:14

There's always that moment. And it is just it's it reminds me of a ray of sun coming through a magnifying glass and burning you when you least expect it. That second, when you realize this person doesn't see me the way I see myself in terms of my magnificence. And in terms of that I can do anything. There's always that split second of realization that things will never be the same again. Yeah, so it's that burning of a bridge, that flinch away. Yeah. For realizing you actually don't want to explore a further relationship with this person. Yeah. Because

Lisa 08:47

And the realization that well, because every now and then you drop your guard. I don't know if you drop your guard. And you think that you are really friends with these people. Yeah, it's happened. It's happened more than once. And then that moment happens. The sun through the glass. Yeah. And you're like, Well, we were never friends. They never thought like, you literally were their pet black friend.

Stacey Alvarez 09:10

Yeah, yes. Yeah, the token, the token in the rainbow coalition of the friends. They thought they had

Lisa 09:18

talked about that, you know, certain barbecues and so on.

Sharon 09:22

Yeah. And then you know, and then there's so many other ways in which that plays out. There's the "you're so articulate".

Stacey Alvarez 09:28

Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sharon 09:30

So yeah, so that says they don't expect black people yet to be articulate.

Lisa 09:35

But here's the question especially for for both of you, but of course, you know, you're our guest. So we'll start with you Stacey. But you speak multiple languages. Yes. Now have you ever gotten the ... Yeah, I'll take that as yes .. gotten the surprise. Surprise that you speak English so well but then the surprise. Oh, you also speak other languages. So

Stacey Alvarez 10:00

Yes, yes, definitely. And, and I've chosen sometimes to see the humor in it. Yeah. And I've chosen sometimes to just kind of break out in that. Well, for me, it's a third language to really surprise people or just sit quietly and let people around you speak sad language without realizing that you understand every single word that they're saying. And if they choose to either insult you or demean you, right, quick clap back. Yeah. Oh, yes. Oh, yes. I remember being on a flight full of Danes, full of Danish people. Right. And, you know, I got up to, you know, fix the overhead department and two young men started to comment on my rather shapely behind in a very demeaning way, and in a way that was clearly based on my degree of melanation as well. So as they kept on doing this, you know, I put the suitcase back, I sat down in my seat, and I turned around I said very nicely to them in Danish. You know, I really like my ass and my boyfriend does too . The color drain edthere, yes, that was.

Sharon 11:03

Actually I remember that. Yes, I have a good one. I have used that actually, with with, you know, with slightly less in my arsenal, than you because I was learning German. And there were two Swiss guys. They're saying something about black people I did not fully understand. But they were talking about me. And I knew it wasn't flattering, right? Yeah. So I trotted out my one phrase that I had at the time, just to make them think I had understood everything. Then I exited stage left. Have you ever done that?

Lisa 11:36

I... Well, you know, my language skills.

Lisa 11:40

But But, um, I feel like I have had a couple of those moments, probably when I was in France, not not coming to mind right now. But in general, I've gotten more of the, you know, oh you're so articulate. I

definitely remember being at another job, you know, someone , like it literally was out of nowhere. And there was no discussion going on relative

Sharon 12:00

They just came up to you and said you're so articulate?

Lisa 12:02

literally in the hallway,

Stacey Alvarez 12:07

That's amazing. And that's just another part of the continuum of that speech. You know, in civil rights. Here it is. And before, you know, a black person is a credit to their race. It used to be said, but and that's the exact same Yeah, in another guise. It's meant to be a quote unquote, compliment.

Lisa 12:23

Yes, it was shade.

Sharon 12:25

Yes, complete shade. It is complete. And especially given that you're a copywriter. You're living with words,

Lisa 12:30

but this is why, you know, I was so happy when we were having that discussion. I got three degrees. Yeah, like, what do you expect? Because it wasn't it was that sentiment that went through my head. He said this, because I was like, What? What are you expecting? Yeah, I am a copywriter. Yeah. Right. I literally swim in the world of words. Right? What else would you expect but for me to be articulate?

Stacey Alvarez 12:56

It's the lack of, you know, of an awareness that, you know, you can blow anyone away with who you are, no matter what your background is, and the questioning that you have a right to be that articulate in the first place and to exist and

Lisa 13:13

that feeling of being allowed. Yeah. Being allowed, like, you know, we're only permitted to certain places.

Sharon 13:22

And the question is, you know, who are you to decide what spaces I'm allowed in?

Stacey Alvarez 13:26

You are not my gatekeeper, and never will be in terms of who I want to be in terms of my future.

Lisa 13:35

You are not our gatekeeper.

Sharon 13:38

Exactly, exactly. So okay, so have you ever, at any point, sort of knowing how people think, code switched, minimized yourself in any way adjusted to make yourself seem less threatening?

Stacey Alvarez 13:53

I think I may have done as a younger person, like as a young lady finding my way through Yeah. And then I realized that now it's time to rip that band aid off.

Stacey Alvarez 14:05

I think I realized that. And it sounds weird to say I would like to say earlier, but no, it was probably around the same time I had that conversation.... bitch, I have three degrees, I came to realize that quite subconsciously. I was minimizing that and going along with the game that you know, somehow, I'm not as autonomous as I am. And somehow I'm not as worthy as I am and all because, yeah, and I thought that this is this is, I'm doing this because it's part of a phase and it's gonna get better. It's never, it's never gonna get better. The more you allow those increments of kind of negation from other people. You're gonna just stop, let's say, actually, yeah.

Lisa 14:45

They know what they are doing.

Stacey Alvarez 14:46

Unless I respect myself. Yes, I know. I said, I can't I can't do this anymore. And it was and it was quite unceremonious. It was quite a shock to the other person, I'm sure because I'm sure to them. I became a different person. Yes.

Sharon 14:58

The point at which you stop going along with everything and you stop accepting bad treatment is a huge wake up call for the people that thought that you were unaware, because Oh,

Lisa 15:10

Stop taking their ish

Sharon 15:15

Because they think you're stupid. Yes. Right, and they think that they can and that you're not going to recognize what you're doing. But you do. The aforementioned degrees, the aforementioned education, the aforementioned life experience means that you always realize what they're doing. And it's only a question of whether you're going to accept it, or not, whether you feel like you want to call them on it today. Or not. Yeah, but you're never in ignorance ...you always know what is going on. You always know what is going on. Yeah.

Lisa 15:46

So, I have another question for you. Do you think there has there ever been a time that you have that you remember moving from pet to threat, as the saying goes, you start the job. Again, [laughter]

Stacey Alvarez 16:04

Well, you start off being you know, in one of the jobs that I've been in, you start off being the the kind of quirky, weird person, you know, they kind of like put you in a in a slot you're the good ones, nice, I'm cheerful, I can smile. And then they come to realize that behind that niceness and that smiling, there's there's power that you're not afraid to wield, and that you're going to be ambitious. You're not going to apologize for that ambition, and you're going to display your prowess and your ability, right? That's when you suddenly see the runway. She's not just a little cute thing, who's gonna stay here forever in the same slot? Yeah, she sees a ladder into infinity. And she's gonna climb it as long as she wants. And that's when you suddenly realize they're like, whoa. So then will come you know, the, the the double speak and the ways that they'll try to undermine you and the questions and, and that's where I'll say to all my sisters out there, stay calm, and stand in your truth and don't take them on. Just keep making the steps forward. And don't always you know, don't react. Just Just Just keep your keep your cool.

Lisa 17:12

Okay. That is excellent advice. First of all. Second of all, you're like a cool machine. Like every, it's like you're just dropping gems. But is it always easy to probably isn't to start to retain your peace, while sort of maintaining your boundaries, standing your ground? Is it easy to do that? Or has there ever been a time when you have not kept your peace?

Stacey Alvarez 17:43

Yeah, there's times when it's not been easy in that there's a moment you shift into the inevitable kind of self doubt, right? But what you realize is that you hold on to a core and you think to yourself, what's the story, you're telling yourself about who you are, and hold on to that story. Hold on to that story and know that nobody's gonna know that story that way. You know, that story? Don't ever doubt, hold on to that. And that will keep you calm. And of course, you know, and yeah, I have to meditate. You know, when I'm going on my jogs and my workouts. Oh, you're doing this to keep fit? No, I'm doing it so I don't strangle you, you know, [laughter] just yeah, just just keep keep your power, know your truth.

Sharon 18:32

I love it. I love it. So let's talk about black women and the glass ceiling. And, you know, I have certainly had the experience where I think I was talking to Lisa about it recently, where, for example, I applied for a promotion. And it was it was a it was a sort of step up, not a full promotion, I moved, I was moving to a different team. It came with a certain salary increase, but when they gave me the role, they only wanted to give me half the salary. Right. And there's ways in which they are you know, I took it because I needed the money. You know, and they knew I needed the money. So, right. But you know, you know, one thing is, you know, you you take those signs, and you say okay, it's time for me to start looking. Yeah, exactly. So they think that they have you where they want you but further to your point, Stacey, you don't have to take that they know there are there's always a point in these relationships, especially when you are the one black person in an all white organization when you need to decide that.... Okay, it's time for me to start planning my exit. Yeah, you bet. It's much better for you to be in charge of that process. Yeah, if you can, because it does not always happen. So I want to know about you, what are your experiences of the glass ceiling?

Stacey Alvarez 19:45

I would say my experience with glass ceiling it's more you as you say you become aware that you're not being you are your future. Instead organization or the things you can do within or without that organization that people don't see it that way people are putting that limit on you. And then there's the double standard that some people have that, okay, someone can work for an organization, they can be of a certain gender, skin color, background, and they can do all kinds of stuff outside to build their brand and build who they are, which will invariably help the organization too, but should YOU choose to do that? Oh, you know, there becomes the questioning of your loyalty. The wondering, do you have time for that? You do? What Why? Why can't you see how this can benefit you? So that's more the type of glass ceiling I think I've experienced, the idea that you can only fit in one slot, and that slot, that ceiling is that ceiling towards us, right? We represent and that roof over, our organizational capacity, not what you can do, which again, invariably, we'll all, you know, kind of

Lisa 20:50

halo effect,

Stacey Alvarez 20:52

it will all be good for everybody involved, there becomes that that questioning of loyalty, that we're seeing that the glass ceiling manifests itself, that's just a word. And what about you, Sis.

Sharon 21:02

One story

Lisa 21:03

How much time do we have?

Sharon 21:05

one story

Lisa 21:06

I can definitely relate to what you said, there, Stacy, I relate strongly to that. Because I have had the experience where I have had the experience where someone who was I guess on the org chart above me, that person and I were collaborating on a project. So of course I was ... my title was lower, but we're doing the same work. We do this project. And this person says to me, you know, you really should be promoted. You deserve it. You've finally proven it. And how long have I been there?

Stacey Alvarez 21:45

See, that's the other thing

Lisa 21:46

They started after me by yourself? Okay, no problem, right. Anyway, of course, we know where this is going. You know, it comes to review time. Excellent. Excellent. Excellent. Excellent. Excellent. No raise. No promotion. Yeah. Yeah. Right. Um, so it is it but let me tell you, like everything, it all goes back to

slavery right. You are meant to just be there and produce for massa. Overseer? Yeah, a cog in a machine. That's it. And so the ceiling comes in that that is all they want. Not not only all they expect, but all they want you to do. I don't want you to shine.

Sharon 22:24

they don't want you to break out of the box don't want to they want to keep you in the box. They expect you to only want and expect the box so that if you're in the box, you should feel grateful for the box.

Lisa 22:37

we are cats. Yeah. You know, you know, because all they tell you guys all they want

Sharon 22:45

you know we are full capable human beings. Yes.

Lisa 22:49

With degrees.

Sharon 22:55

Right. We have, we have potential. We have plans. We have ideas. And nobody's gonna box us in. That is the energy that I'm taking into my 21st century energy.

Lisa 23:07

Yeah, nobody is boxing me in period. Yeah, so speaking of not being boxed in. Has there ever been a time where you on a job broke out of a box? And if so were there repercussions?

Stacey Alvarez 23:29

Yes, yes.

Lisa 23:32

Yes. So every time we ask you're like, yeah.

Stacey Alvarez 23:34

Yeah, yeah, yeah, I'm definitely in that. There are ways in which you I remember I changed a particular procedure or process and added it something that made it not just more efficient, but a better representation of what had to be done, right, or how we could actually get to the conclusion we needed to get to. And, you know, the shock that that would even happen that I would do it without being asked. So in other words, how dare you show initiative? Right, right. So and then the repercussion of that being well, are you sure you might shoot you thought of the site? Like, why don't you get this from sorry? No, I got it from me. I came up with this. There's that to that expectation that something is not original, that you must have gotten it from somewhere. Yeah, it's another Oh, yeah. And that was that was

Lisa 24:23

just, you know, I don't want to take up too much time. But let's just say, that resume. And actually, I was at some university I've been to, I don't remember which course it was, but I was I was at a university. And just I think it was just doing like an Associate's at the time. And anyway, but you know, I actually already had my bachelor's. It's a long story. but so I did a review a movie review, but I did it in the way that I was trained to do. And so I went to the professor who did give me my a plus, but then handed me when he handed me my paper back questioned. Did you know his excellent, excellent work? Your analysis is far and above blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. You're extraordinary. The Are you sure that you wrote this? They could not just wow. Give me the win. Just leave it there. Yeah, no, not I'm not just the win. But this is literally what I was trained to do. I studied literature. Yeah. in three languages. Yeah. This is literally what I do. This is what I do. If I were to write a bad one, that would be a surprise. Right now, don't ask me to go and do something bad because I don't have anything. Yeah. Yeah. It's my specialty. Oh, yeah.

Lisa 25:37

Right. Yeah.

Sharon 25:40

Exactly. Exactly. Alright, so it's right. Well, I would like to thank you, Stacey for another scintillating conversation. It has been excellent. Thank you for being with us. And so we're the introvert sisters. Thank you for listening, and we will catch you on the next episode. Thank you,.

Lisa 26:08

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