

**LISA M. DIAMOND**

**Salt Lake City, UT**

**An Interview by**

**Jacqueline Cockrell**

**Observers: Kaylee Martin, Cullen O'Brien, Charlotte Peacock**

**20 March 2021**

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**Salt Lake City, Utah**

**DIAMOND, LISA M.**

b. 1971

Lisa Diamond is a renowned professor, researcher, and published author working in the Psychology department at the University of Utah. Her main research interests are women's sexuality, sexual fluidity over the lifespan, and relationship science. Diamond wrote "Sexual Fluidity: Understanding Women's Love and Desire," published by Harvard University Press. In this oral history interview, Diamond shares the experiences and motivations she had as she became a prominent lesbian woman research psychologist. Diamond also emphasises the importance of both the mentorship she received growing up, and the mentorship she imparts to her students as a professor of Gender Studies and Psychology.

Keywords: HPSCI; 3950; HPSCI 3950; Women; STEM; Women in STEM; Sexuality; Sexual Fluidity; Developmental Psychology; Psychology; Sexual Development; Human Development; Health Psychology; Gender; Gender Studies; Youth; Youth Sexual Development; Youth Sexuality; Women's Sexual Fluidity; Women Sexual Fluidity; Woman; Scientist; Woman Scientist; Oral History; Oral Recording; Biography; Interview; Video Interview Woman; Video Interview Women; Clyde; Aileen Clyde; Aileen; Women's Legacy; Woman Legacy; Lisa Diamond; Lisa; Diamond; U of U Gender Studies; University of Utah Gender; 20th Century Women; 21st Century Women

**THIS IS AN INTERVIEW WITH LISA M. DIAMOND ON MARCH 20, 2021. THE INTERVIEWER IS JACQUELINE COCKRELL, AND THE OBSERVERS ARE CULLEN O'BRIEN, CHARLOTTE PEACOCK, AND (LATER) KAYLEE MARTIN. THIS IS A CONTRIBUTION TO THE AILEEN H. CLYDE 20TH CENTURY WOMEN'S LEGACY ARCHIVE. THIS IS THE ONLY INTERVIEW WITH LISA M. DIAMOND.**

**JC:** Hello!

**LD:** Hello.

**CO:** You're on mute.

**LD:** Thank you for that.

**JC:** All good, um well thanks for being here!

**LD:** My pleasure.

**JC:** I think. Is everybody good to get started here? Cool! Um, so let's just do like quick introductions really quick, so that we all know who everybody is. So I'm Jacqueline and I'll be asking you the main most questions if somebody has a-

**LD:** Okay

**JC:** -follow up they'll pop in but, for the most part, it will be me. So I'm studying Sociology and Criminology with minors in Spanish and Psychology at the U.

**LD:** That is a really interesting collection of stuff- topics.

**JC:** I know haha-

**LD:** Spanish was like yeah I was like oh yeah and there's more.

**JC:** Yeah yep. Um yeah, so I'm a third year student and I'm just glad we're able to talk to you! Charlotte or Cullen?

**CO:** Yeah, my name is Cullen. I'm a fourth year student. I'm majoring in political science and economics. What am I missing?.. And...yeah. This is a, this is a really cool cool thing we're doing, and I'm really excited.

**LD:** So cool.

**CP:** Hey, I'm Charlotte. I'm a double major in psychology and criminology. I'm a sophomore and that's it.

**JC:** sweet! awesome. cool so oh one thing I did want to do is go around and just do preferred pronouns. So my pronouns are she/her/hers.

**CO:** Mine are he/him/his.

**CP:** And mine is she/her and her.

**LD:** I'm also the she's areas. Awesome.

**JC:** Okay let's just jump right in here's a little bit of a warm up question, if you could have a dinner party with three people who would they be and why?

**LD:** My God. Um Barack Obama, Michelle Obama, and you know that would be enough. I think I think they count as three people, I would just like want to talk to them and, like observe their marriage and just love on them. I can't invite one daughter without inviting the other, oh you know the dog their dog I want I would want their dog to be the third person. Is his name Bo? I don't remember.

**JC:** Um, I can't remember either something like that! Um cool! That was a good answer. Um, okay so, can you tell us a little bit about your childhood? Was there a specific memory that you have that like got you interested in what you're doing today or was it kind of just like a build up of everything?

**LD:** Yeah I mean I felt like that I, I feel like I had a pretty uninteresting childhood I grew up in Los Angeles. My dad was a research cardiologist, so although he was a doctor he didn't practice medicine, he just did research and and my mom, you know, taught piano. And you know I as I got a little older I think my dad you know I showed a talent for writing and I was very good in

school, so my dad started to like give me copies of his academic papers and he would publish them which about things that I completely did not understand, they were like statistical modeling of like cardiovascular risk factors and using like bayesian models to predict, you know myocardial infarction and I had no I was like well, no I like I cannot, I cannot understand the sentences dad but, but I think he was trying to um, You know, he really loved science and he loved scientific writing and I think he was, I think he was trying to invite me in to that and and even though you know I really had no idea of that content area I you know we did through the rest of our life have you know until he died have a very special bond about being scientists, you know, and that I would show him reviews for my papers and we're like ah these asshole reviewers and and he would complain about, and so we had you know, I think, from an early age, I think he was trying to invite me into some sort of, sort of scholarly relationship or something that was kind of poorly done because I was 12 but I look back on it now with a lot of fondness you know, but that was the- for him. That was, you know, like other dads might have been like hey let's toss the football around my dad was like Do you think I responded to this reviewers critique of the third paragraph? I'm like i've no idea what you're talking about, but I realized, now, that that was his way of trying to connect with me.

**JC:** Okay, So kind of a little bit going off of that was there, somebody who made you interested in your path into research on women's sexual fluidity?

**LD:** You know not like, that really wasn't until college, I mean in in high school I didn't even you know, if you asked me what I was going to do for a career, when I was in high school, I would have said, I was going to be a poet, and I was going to be a creative writer. That was what why I was interested in, and you know and it used to actually be accomplished with my dad because he would ask know what do you want to do and I would say, oh I'm gonna I'm gonna

like write poetry and dad's like no she going to be a scientist and I was like, "you don't know what the fuck you're talking about, like, leave me alone, dad". Um and, you know, it's like I think, you know, I don't and I don't think it's that he had very much insight I just think he truly just wanted to meet it be like a little version of him, I think, was just you know pure self interest. But at that you know yeah yeah I didn't even really know I didn't really think you know. In high school, there was a psychology class that I could have taken and I didn't take it. Like I didn't find that interesting at all. So it really wasn't until college that I was even interested in the social sciences at all, and I have to credit, you know, the University of Chicago where I went to college. They had a very rigorous core curriculum and basically for the first two years you don't really get a lot of choice to take. You have to take this very rigorous Curriculum which I have to say, having gone through it, I think, was really good idea. Um, but that was how I discovered the social sciences and I am because we were you know they had this sort of social science court first your sequence, had a bit of anthropology it had a bit of psychology it had it just had a sort of very broad and also had a lot of theory and that you know that, for me, was eye opening but initially what I was most in transpired was anthropology. And you know in different meanings systems and the sort of philosophical implications of like you know where do our notions of gender come from. Do they come from nature or do we create them through culture? So those sorts of questions of like what is human nature? what are humans really like? How much are we creating that through cultural meaning systems? Versus them being you know sort of biological truths that was totally fascinating and intriguing to me so initially I actually thought I was going to be, I was going to major in anthropology but my best friend who was my roommate was saying that she thought she was going to major in anthropology and I thought it would be bad for our friendship if we had the same major because we would be competitive so I'm like okay i'll

major in psychology instead. Completely kind of random right? Um and, frankly, at that time you know this was, I was in the University of Chicago from 1989 to 1992 the psychology department at that time was not that interesting like they've it's changed a lot it's a much more interesting department now, but the psychology classes, that I was taking tick- not really light any sort of fire under me they were very experimental and I didn't find them very interesting they weren't nearly as intellectually challenging as the anthropology courses. But one of the, you know, there were a number of faculty in anthropology who also view themselves sort of a psychologist or they would call themselves cultural psychologist and there was a little, kind of, mini program at university of Chicago called the Committee on Human Development, which was basically like anthropological and psychologically oriented people. And one of the people in that program who I took a class from was Gilbert Herdt, who was an anthropologist who was most well known for having gone to Indonesia in the 70s and discovering that a routine aspect of development among boys in these you know indigenous tribes was engaging in a lot of same sex behavior. And, and he had this very, you know, influential book, you know, called Guardians of the Flutes that was really about how our our entire notion of what normal sexual development looks like it's completely culturally constructed and and that that and that the question of well wait these boys are engaging in same sex activity, but they all ended up growing up to be straight and you know, and I remember you know, taking his class and. and, and I, and I had the gall to to ask the question because I was like well you know are are the boys, like when they're doing this when they're engaging a lot of like fellatio with other boys, because they think that- Because in that belief system, the way you become a man is by ingesting the semen of other men. So the belief system is that you, you don't just grow up to be a man, naturally, you have to ingest semen in order to be able to produce it yourself. And so older boys would be fellated by younger boys and

then I say this younger boys get older than they are the ones that are being fellated by even younger boys so it's like from a Western perspective we look at this and we're like oh my God. But in that culture, it was you know completely normal, so I asked like well are when this is happening like are they are they enjoying it? And Gilbert Herdt was like I think it must have been like six years of it, he, like his glasses are down on his nose and it's like, "What a ridiculous question", and it just then moved on and I was like, "I'm just gonna, I'm just going to die like, you know, I clearly I'm too stupid, you know, to understand, you know". So I started reading kind of more of his work and around that time and he had just started doing a project with another faculty Member who was in this Committee on Human Development on gay and lesbian youth in Chicago. You know now we think about like gay and lesbian youth, you know we're like oh yeah, of course, some people come out as queer when they're teens in 1990 this was like wow you know, like people are gay when they're kids? Like what? So there was actually this social support Center called Horizons in Chicago that provided social support and support groups for queer teenagers and he had started this project with a colleague of his Burt Coaler(sp?) and another one Andy Boxer on on just sort of like wow What can we learn about sort of sexual development by looking at these kids who are? You know, really challenging our notions of of what's normal and that was brand new I mean it just and, and so it was around that time and, and by that point I think I had already come out at that point, I came out my second year. Um and so toward the end of college, when I was like what am I going to do, like do I want to be an activist, or when I you know I've been doing some abortion clinic Defense work and political activist work that I found really meaningful. I'm like what should I do? Should I like get a job? Should I go to school? I'm really good at school, but what am I going to do? Once I discovered that that there was a whole like academic area that was about the development of these queer youth, I was



like oh my God like that's really interesting. And I quickly found that really most of the studies that were being done of these young gay kids and there are very few studies and they'd be like we interviewed 15 you know kids there were they were almost always men, there were always always young men. And, and so the feminist in me was like Okay, I know that when you apply to graduate school you're supposed to have like an idea of what you're going to do. And so I was like well then, what I could say that I'm going to do is kind of bring women back into this picture. Like this isn't a new phenomenon. We don't know what kind of what's going on with it, where are the women, you know what's what's going on with that and and you know when you apply to graduate school you're supposed to find you know potential mentors that you could work with well there were really there were like three people who were doing work on gay, lesbian teens. There was Tony dia Gelley(sp?) at Penn State University and the idea of going to Penn state was just- And I think it was right decision because it's in the middle of nowhere. Like like you're nowhere. Um Ritch Savin Williams at Cornell, and then Gil Herdt you know at Chicago. So you know I I went ahead and I applied, you know, even though I didn't want to. I knew that it was like not really good to stay in the same place for graduate school that you went to go to college. I'm like I don't have that many options so like I'm gonna apply to work with Gil Herdt you know anyway and- So I got into Chicago and I got into Cornell and I spent a lot of time thinking about it, and you know finding like you know I just think it's good for me to just get out of Chicago and maybe do a new thing. So even even at that point, I really didn't have this sense, whether this was the right career direction. I kind of I was like I don't know what to do next, maybe this it was it was very- It felt very slapdash to me and it felt really uncertain and you know it all turned out. But, I always try to reassure undergrads like don't stress too much because

a lot of things unfold in a sort of happenstance way and there wasn't a lot of plan from us, and how I ended up at Cornell it, you know it easily could have gone in a totally different direction.

**JC:** Yeah! Um, so when you were talking about like your research with the gay and lesbian youth you were talking about how, a lot of times, like, females weren't as included. Can you- and I know that you also talked about calling yourself a “feminist scientist”. Is that related to that, and can you talk about that a little more?

**LD:** Yeah, of course! I mean, I was just like what like even here, even here like you know shouldn't shouldn't the the the queer community are but at that point, it was you know again lesbian when it like should you know, should there be more awareness of the importance of inclusivity. And you know, was an interesting time because that was also at the height of the AIDS crisis, and you know there were a lot of tensions between feminist activists, you know and organizations like act up because you know, often you know, even though the epidemic was definitely hitting men and not women, there were a lot of women who were putting themselves on the line in you know in those protests and the act up in prayer nation protest, who felt like they weren't getting as much support back from the gay male community you know gay men's community, as, you know, they were putting in. So, I think they're you know, it was a time of a lot of of I think awareness that even within the queer Community sexism could still reign and sexism could still exclude some voices and some experiences so I was you know, I was acutely aware of that.

**JC:** Okay, awesome! Well, so we want to move on a little bit to, like, your experiences within the research. So did you ever feel that maybe you did science differently as a woman or that your experience had- might have been different if you did research in feminism and science?

**LD:** I definitely. I do, I mean I remember at around you know I remember in the year before I went to graduate school I had sort of discovered I don't know how I came upon this but I had discovered a lot of writing about sort of feminist critiques of scientific epistemology, Sandra Harding, Jane Flacks know a whole bunch of postmodern theorists who were Oh, you know who were writing just this unbelievably eloquent work about about the sort of myth of scientific objectivity and the way in which that you know the sort of denial of the role of the of the knower was a sort of an oppressive sort of patriarchal fiction that just serve to continue to exclude individuals who wanted to take responsibility for their own subject position, who wanted to to be open and honest about the fact that their race and class and gender and sexuality informed the way that they saw the world. And that you know that that's not what you're supposed to do, as a scientist, and so I you know I definitely you know went into graduate school with the sense of mission that I did not want to reproduce that kind of what i've used as like patriarchal classist racist kind of knowledge that it was important to me to kind of cue to what was called at that point feminist sense standpoint epistemology that you take responsibility for the fact that you definitely do see things a certain way and that your job is not to remove that bias, but to call it out and to question it and and, and so I I do think I went and that's part of why you know, when I you know first started working with with Ritch at Cornell you know the very you know my my first instinct was well, I want to do an interview study. I want- I need- I don't want to just collect numerical data on like how old this person like I I I'm seeking sort of a more engaged immersive type of scholarship a little bit more like anthropology right? So that was a kind of you know, it was almost like an ethnographic sort of approach so uh and I, and I felt, you know it's kind of about that, knowing that you know. At the end of the day, I'm gonna have to produce data and I'm gonna have to analyze it and that that if I want to kind of do this work in a different way, I still

need to make sure that I'm hitting all the marks and fulfilling all the requirements so that I can buy myself a little leeway.

**JC:** Yeah! And so it looks like we have a little bit of a follow up question here. How did you deal with intersectionality as a researcher of sexual fluidity?

**LD:** You know when when I started out, I was pretty naive um you know I had, I never even heard the word 'intersectionality' until later in my graduate career. And it's interesting it's like I have colleagues who have still never heard that word, so you know it's one of those things it's like god um. And when I got to Cornell you know Cornell was the whitest place I had ever lived, you know, in my life, you know I grew up in LA, then I moved to Chicago where I lived on the South side of Chicago. And then I moved to Ithaca, New York and I've literally never seen so many white people in my life. Um and so when I started collecting data, I just- there was just- there just weren't that many- you know, people have different you know ethnic backgrounds in the sample and so I just sort of set it aside and didn't really think about it, that much because I sort of feel like I was, you know, I was in this naive place and I wasn't really thinking very critically about it at that time, I think it took a while for me to kind of think more more deeply about that and to have sort of a different you know way of thinking about that and that, of course, that the downside is that I moved from from Ithaca which I thought was the whitest place on the planet to Utah, which IS the whitest place on the planet and and it's been a real it's been a real struggle to to find enough people with ethnically diverse backgrounds to allow for more substantive kind of you know, invest-investigatory approach to those things, so it really wasn't on my radar when I started out, and I think I think that's you know, in some ways a very common experience for maybe it's different now, I think I know that, like at the University of Utah. We have certain requirements, you know that that sort of like you can't graduate without having had

to wrestle with those issues, but I felt like at Chicago- and maybe it's the fact that Chicago had University of Chicago since was based on the South side of Chicago had a pretty troubled relationship with you know with race overall because here they are it's this private University in the midst of a poor you know majority black neighborhood and you know it was not that uncommon for black students to get asked by security guards in the library, to show their ID, so I think Chicago did not necessarily prepare me very well to engage those questions. Um, you know I would hope that it would be different now I mean that was you know 30 years ago, but I think I was pretty naive, you know when I started doing my research it wasn't on my radar at all.

**JC:** Okay, and thank you for that! So a little bit um so obviously location affected everything um, do you think that time period influence like your education, research, career choices?

Because I know that you said that it was super new in the 1990s, like the idea of queer children.

Can you talk about that a little bit?

**LD:** Yeah I mean, in some ways I sort of feel very lucky because well lucky and unlucky because you know, when I when I first, got to Cornell and you know had my first meeting with my advisor Ritch Savin Williams, who is a dear dear friend, to this day, and who you know I have so much gratitude for. You know, he revealed to me that he had been about to retire early, because after he didn't start doing gay related research until after he was full professor and totally secure. And, once he started publishing stuff on queer youth, all of a sudden students stopped applying to work with him, it was it was still a very stigmatized kind of thing. And after a couple of years of having nobody apply to work with him, he was like you know, maybe i'll just go into clinical practice and be a therapist and I guess just you know not going to work out. And then I showed up and I like to joke to him that, like I like to take credit for them, the next you know 20 years of his life, because then of course he stayed in academia and then, then the whole field of

developmental research on queer kids took off and he was you know, he was a leader of that movement, but it was not easy to do that work at that time. It was it was enough that it almost drove him out of the field and and and so, when you know the nice thing about that is that working with him I you know, it was this real feeling of of you know, nobody else is really doing this, but we know we know that this is important, you and I believe it, it was this real bond between the two of us that really got me through because you know, when I would do the things that are normal graduate student is supposed to do, like go to national conferences like the Society for research and adolescence and society for research on child development. Nobody was doing anything related to gay anything, and I would just look at these hundreds of other graduate students walking around wearing little suits and wearing heels and I just felt like I do not, I cannot be in this profession, like there's no place for me here there's no place for what I'm doing. You know I remember having this long kind of conversation with a fellow graduate student. I'm like what am I doing, I should just quit. And he's like you shouldn't quit you shouldn't quit so it just you know I never doubted that you know that I was passionate about what I was doing, but I did not see an appetite for that kind of work at all, but you know again, it was this really tender moment because there started to be an uptick of visibility of these issues and and there was just sort of like a critical mass of people who were like Oh, I guess, we should talk about sexual orientation. So I ended up getting a lot of- hold on my my wife's yoga is too loud, let me tell her- turn it down.

**JC:** No worries.

**LD:** Hey too loud. Way too loud! Alright, so the so the outside, was that you know as people started to discover Oh, maybe we should kind of you know, spend more time talking about this, there were very few people doing that kind of work and Ritch Savin Williams, was one of the

only people who had a reputation, so he would just bring me in he's like oh somebody asked me to write a chapter on this stuff so you know let's write it together, so the fact that there was there was this transition point there just started to be a little bit of interest and Ritch was so generous and so you know, he was always pushing me forward and being like you know you should talk to Lisa you should talk to Lisa. So I got a lot more, you know toward the end of my graduate career, I just got a lot more kind of opportunities, and I think the average graduate student did because it was that this historical transition point where people were like Oh, I guess, we should pay attention to that and there just weren't that very many people to talk to, and so is this weird thing it was like really, really hard the beginning but for exactly that reason, it also became really really beneficial, but I happen to be in the right place at the right time.

**JC:** Right yeah! So, then why did you decide to go to Utah? What was your thought process?

**LD:** I love when people ask me that. It was not a decision, it was the only job I was offered you know. You go on the academic job market you don't know what you're going to get. People are like, why did you choose Utah? Like, I chose to eat. I chose not to be poor. You know I had no idea kind of what to expect. My my current wife, who I had met at Cornell um you know was you know she was getting interested in public policy health policy work, and so you know she was like well you know, wherever you get a job there, better be a good job for me and I'm like I have no idea if that's gonna be true. And, you know I only had you know, three interviews and I only got you know one job offer so it like that was why I ended up at Utah and I knew nothing about Utah. I was just like we can leave if it doesn't work out. That- the fact that Utah ended up being an amazing place was completely unexpected.

**JC:** Okay, I mean it makes sense! Okay, one, second, let me figure out where we're at here and our questions. Okay, so a little bit like talking about still your experience with Savin Williams

and like your research and your experience being a mentee did you ever feel discouraged, or I mean even today as a professor, or do you know anybody who did feel discouraged, maybe relating to gender or sexual orientation?

**LD:** I mean, I definitely did at that time you know it's it's odd because you know kind of gender presentation is something that is sort of fluid itself or the life force, and I think like right now, you know I'm a much more sort of Fem. presenting person than I was back then and I remember having a lot of anxiety about how to dress and how to appear at conferences and and whether you know, and this sort of you know, for me, this ethical question of like, you know, do I do I just do what's gonna make everybody comfortable and look more feminine and were like heels, even though I don't really know how to wear heels? Um or do I just be myself and allow on my work to kind of stand on its own? And so I think at that time that was that that was a really preoccupying kind of thing, and I remember, you know, my my other mentor was Cindy Hazzan (sp?) and she was just a huge just a huge figure in my life, and I remember when I got you know the call that I had you know that I had a job interview Utah. She and I went to the mall so that I could buy what you know what out, like an outfit that I was comfortable with and makeup, you know? because I felt like completely unable to like do that you know it was just like not a part of like my thing. And, it was it was so beautiful and so loving of her to be like what yeah let's go to the mall, let's figure it out and you know, it's it's one of those things, I felt like I was just you know gifted with mentors who who you know didn't say like "Buck it up," you know blah blah blah. They were truly kind of there for me in my own sort of space of like you know what does it mean to be like a lesbian on the job market and, like, you know what is that what's going to happen, you know I think it's a very I think it's easier now, although you know not in all places, I mean you know the pockets of kind of idiocy in this country are everywhere and I definitely



think it's it's easier for like cis-gender or lesbian and for like any sort of trans or gender diverse person, but it definitely was something that you know gave me a lot of anxiety at that time when I was younger.

**JC:** Yeah, of course. Um, so it looks like Kaylee joined us. Hi Kaylee.

**KM:** Hi!

**JC:** We are going to move right along. So, was there ever like an option for you to study older generations versus youth? Or was that just kind of your option.

**LD:** You know I could have if I wanted to. Um, you know I actually found that when I when I started, you know part of me was just and you know I started out interested in youth. Even though some of the women that I was interviewing you know they weren't necessarily like teenagers, they were like in their early 20s. But I found that and again this was it was part of my whole sort of feminist standpoint cosmology I found that that something that really sort of helped the rapport that I had with my interview participants was that I was close in age to them. And that I'm similar to them. And I would start out the interviews saying I'm lesbian, you know I feel it's important for queer people to do research on queer people, and you know. I was committed ethically to breaking down that false line of objectivity and and say and and And really connecting with participants, on a personal level. Which is like exactly what you're not supposed to do, as a scientist, but, when people are like, "wow how did you how did you hold on to your sample?" For now it's been over 20 years like because I did the 20 year follow up interviews, you know a number of years ago and I'm like, it's because I wasn't afraid to personally connect with every single person that I talked to. And that I never approached them as like an objective researcher I approached them as like a fellow young person, a fellow lesbian, you know and, and

so I think that's part of why I gravitated toward that age group is because that was where I was you know in my life. And so that kind of facilitated the whole process.

**JC:** Great, thank you! Um so we know that you chose... Was it anthropology over psychology because of your roommate? What took you back to psychology? Was there anything like...

**LD:** You know, it was really discovering that there was this area of gay youth research. And I was like oh! I guess, those are psychology journals that are publishing that work. Okay, well if that's if that's what psychology is, I guess, I could do that. And I remember, then when I was filling out like you know graduate school applications and they'd be like "okay within this particular university like what program are you affiliating with like developmental psychology?" I'm like, "I guess I'm a developmental psychologist? because I'm interested in youth?" I don't know. So it was still this really ambivalent thing, and you know, in some ways, I feel like that's part of the reason that Utah ended up being a good fit for me because, unlike a lot of developmental psychology programs, where everyone is studying like babies and children, Utah happened to have a developmental program that was much more lifespan oriented that had people that were studying midlife and adulthood and aging. And so, they had this broad appreciation for the fact that development never stops, that development as a lifelong thing. And I think that's kind of why it worked out so well because, like, you know now, people were like "Oh, what kind of psychologists are you? are I'm like "like I'm a developmental psychologist. but I always feel like. You know, but I'm not interested in in in children until they're old enough to want to have sex. Like, I don't care about infants. I don't care about cognition, I don't care about like piaget and all that stuff. na na na."

**JC:** Haha, and who is your intended audience there when you were doing this research or what was your goal, did you have a goal in mind?

**LD:** I didn't, I didn't have a goal and, you know, the one thing that did help is that there was also a growing sort of pocket of psychology that was focused on close relationships. And one of the things that I had included in my graduate school kind of you know, personal statement was that you know, I was interested in studying young women's sexual identity development and that I was also interested in studying the role of relationships in the in those developments. And that was, you know, partly biased by my own experience that, you know, part of my own kind of coming out was you know falling in love with very specific people. And that, you know, and that that sort of provided me a context with the work, so I was like, "oh wow, that's an interesting because I wonder if that's common to more women so?" So I, you know, I also sort of identified early on, as someone who's interested in youth and sexuality, but also someone that was interested in close relationships. And so I would attend conferences that were, you know, like there's something called the International Association for relationships, research and the international network on personal relationships and it was a growing area of research at that time. And something that Cindy Hassan did a lot of research on. So I often felt like well, even if the really strict developmental psychologists don't really care about sexual orientation, my sense is that these relationship researchers they're more kind of my kind of people, you know they're interested in love, you know, and they are definitely like the most sort of positive conference experiences I had as a graduate student we're often at those relationship conferences, where I felt like they kind of got me, so I thought well that's my bag. I'm I'm a relationships researcher, you know who studies young adult you know sexuality and that helped me to feel like I had more of a home.

**JC:** Yeah was it hard for you to, I guess like find a place there? Or, like how was it for you, like kind of going against like the social norms of the time of like queer children?

**LD:** The one good thing is that almost every single time I would give any sort of talk a presentation, somebody would come up to me afterward and be like oh my God, I totally know what you're talking about like this is a real thing. And those tiny moments were everything. They were everything to me. You know, every time someone was like you know that's how I came out to I felt like there's there's something to this. Like you're not crazy. Um, those, those absolutely got me through. Um, one moment like that could get me through six months of feeling like "I hate academia and I don't understand like how I'm gonna have this profession." And and those moments also made me, you know they sort of spoke to my political soul that you know if there's if there are experiences that marginalized people are having that are not being voiced. And, and I have the opportunity to amplify those voices then then that's you know that's activism, in addition to, you know, scholarship. And, you know, and I, I could never really understand you know some of my graduate student colleagues who were studying topics that were purely intellectual and who were sort of divorced from the real world like the way that some neuron fires in the brain I was like yeah that's interesting but, I don't think I could ever make a life path about and a scientific question that didn't have some sort of social or political implications like just like at the end of the day, you know, what's that? And the part of me that I had considered not going to graduate school and being an activist instead. I think I always wanted to feel like, you know, so, well, every time that a person would come up to me i'd be like okay so there's a larger meaning to this there's a larger meaning. And it might be, you know, I don't know how many people but, but you know it's it's it's personally meaningful to people and so then like I'm allowed to kind of care about it, intellectually.

**JC:** Right, um, so was there any backlash ever to the results of your research or activism?

**LD:** You know, surprisingly not. I always expected that there would be more. I was always prepared for, like, other lesbians, to be like I don't know I'm not a very fluid lesbian but really, the main thing is just again and then the larger and larger audiences that I would speak to about my work that they people would just come up and be like This is so true like nobody wants to talk about it but it's so true, and so I really didn't experience you know any backlash. You know later on in my career, the you know the reparative therapy folks were like oh that's flowing. But that didn't really happen early on, which I'm really grateful for, because I think. I didn't have the confidence to maybe handle it when I was younger that I did later like later I feel more comfortable being like F you you're full of shit. When I was younger, I think I would have been more freaked out by that but really most of the response I got early on, from members of my own community was “so glad somebody's talking about this.”

**JC:** Yeah so I it looks like we found something back in 2008 and there was a problem with the National Association for Research and Treatment of Homosexuality and them using your research. Can you talk a little bit about that?

**LD:** NARTH is a very well known organization that supports what we would call conversion therapy or sexual orientation change efforts. I think they they have a an intellectual model that is the basis for the therapy that they advocate, which is that same sex attractions come from a sort of fucked up relationships with your parents. So for boys, and they're way more interesting in boys than girls. That boys who got too close to their mothers and not close enough to their fathers, you know, have this messed up relationship with their sexuality and if you go to therapy to resolve your parental relationships, then the same sex attraction is will disappear, and so they... Uh, someone told me that they were on their website, they were citing some of my work on sexual fluidity to sort of support the notion that hey these things can change, you know you

have a gay kid, and maybe they're not gay. And you know I really I really bent over backwards in all of my publication to make it clear that the changes that I was observing over time and the women I was studying we're not effortful changes they kind of happen, you know, in the same way that, like the weather changes, but we don't change it, it changes on its own. And that there's a really big important distinction between you know the evolving nature of your sexuality, as it as it just emerges within you and and these effortful attempts to to eliminate you know sexual feelings and um and and so given that I had been very clear about that my work, I felt like, you know, there's no chance that they missed that. You know they're just cherry picking and they're misusing my work, and so there had been like a guy who had some website who's you know whose goal was to just sort of try to um kind of fact check a lot of the stuff on the Narth websites. So he contacted me and he's like, "would you like, you know, an opportunity to correct the record?" I'm like "Hell yeah...." And I remember being clear, you know with myself, at the time. Oh, the right thing to do, academically is for me to say "no", you know. "I just produced the science I don't involve myself in what happens", you know, but I I view that as bullshit I was like no like. These are my people, this is me that that he's trying to you know that this organization is trying to oppress so, even though I knew that it was like not necessarily the right thing to do, I just felt like that's you know that's not the kind of academic I'm going to be like you know I'm going to still be a politically engaged scholar, and if I feel that someone is misusing my work for political purposes I'm going to call it out.

**JC:** Yeah and do you think being a woman affected that at all? Or played a role?

**LD:** You know I don't know. Um, you know it's interesting because most it,... the vast majority of conversion therapy repetitive therapy efforts revolve around men, because in our society being a man who violates the male gender roles to have sex with other men is you know just about the

greatest crime, you could commit. Women, historically, have not been punished as much for same sex behavior. Women are not as common targets for these repetitive therapy attempts. Um, you know people again it's it's I think it was a Queen Victoria who you know, when asked about lesbians it's like "What could the poor things do," right so. Women in some ways, have been able to escape some of the most oppressive acts against queer people because our society views kind of queer men as just a more disgusting dangerous you know sort of thing. And and so so to some degree, I felt like an obligation, like as a woman to be like I'm not gonna let this happen to my queer brothers on my watch, you know that. In this in this, you know what's happening to them is worse than what's happening to women and in the same way that you want white people to stand up for black people and you want hets to stand up for... I felt like it was important for women to stand up for men who were being sort of more brutalized by that particular form of oppression.

**JC:** Thank you for that um so we're going to move on a little bit to talk about you, writing and publishing your book. So what led you to writing a book? And did you face any problems writing or publishing it?

**LD:** It was it was actually some extremely kind of happy and easy experience, so you know I had just gotten tenure, and you know after you get tenure you're you know you're given a sabbatical so you have a year, where you don't have to teach you know you can just focus on your research. And you know and people for a long time, have been like "Oh, once you get tenure, you need to write a book, you know, to take your sabbatical year and write a book," and so I was like "well I guess I'm here I guess that's what I have to do" and some folks at Harvard University press you know, had already reached out to me earlier and been like oh we're aware of your work, you know you know if you ever want to write a book, you know, let us know, and so I like I wrote up a book proposal really quickly, you have to like write a proposal and then like a sample chapter

so like I spent a week just writing a proposal on Chapter like this sounds great let's no let's go for it. And so, then I just I just spent that year kind of writing the book and you know I had already been thinking about these things for so long that it really was not that hard, and it was kind of nice to take a break from using such academic language and to and to inhabit sort of a more general and kind of colloquial voice, where you know I remember you know writing when I be writing about the experiences of certain of my participants, it was such a pleasure and pain relief to be able to go ahead and include my memories of the sound of their voice or their appearance and what their apartment looked like and those sorts of details that have been living in my soul, you know for for years and years, and to have a space to sort of make these very human people you know, and not the numbers that they had been in an academic publications. So it was really, it was a really pleasurable enjoys, you know, experience writing it and they didn't, you know, ask for that many changes so it was a pretty we're kind of pretty nice experience.

**JC:** Good! And did you ever see any struggles or obstacles that females came or ran into when trying to publish their books? Was that something that you could see?

**LD:** It's really interesting it's you know I think it's very different for different disciplines so psychology is a profession, where writing books is not what we consider the main thing that you do you write journal articles. And, but there are other you know I have colleagues in other areas like history where that's, the main thing you do, is you write books. And so I think, because the stakes are a little bit lower in psychology it's like writing a book is just something you do for you, it doesn't give you the same amount of credit that you would get for writing articles. You know I never experienced those obstacles, but I think that some of those intersections of racism classism and homophobia in gender I think are are probably more pernicious for scholars who are in areas where writing the book is the thing, and where the stakes are way higher.



**JC:** Right yeah that's a good point, I didn't think about that um. Let's see. Um, so we're gonna move on a little bit to your fields of interest, so a little more content I guess um how do experiences that children have affect their sexual development?

**LD:** hmm this is like this is like the \$6 million question.

**JC:** Yes. Haha.

**LD:** You know, one of my one of my biggest sort of a I don't know like complaints or whatever agonies is. You know, one of the reasons we can't totally answer this question is because, at least in the United States, you're just not really allowed to ask children about sexuality, at all, you just can't. You literally cannot say anything. So any sort of inferences we want to make about how certain experiences affect their sexuality, has to be based on talking to them when they're an adult when it's safe to ask them about sex and then asking them to retrospect, like 20 years kind of earlier, which is completely whacked. And you know and and, and so the truth is that we don't completely know. I do think that the big paranoia of you know, religious Conservatives, which is that being exposed to to more images of queer and trans people is going to increase the number of queer and trans people. They're correct, yes, it will, yes, having more access to that idea, are we going to end up with more queer and trans people you know in 10 years than we have right now, because.... Yes, we will! So I feel like I want to stop having a debate with the conservative folks about like "Oh no let's not do anything that might induce our children to become queer or trans" I'm like, let's just decide that it's okay to be queer trans and then let's just give kids the best education we can give them and not give a Fuck as to whether they're queer and trans. You know my my sister is a second grade teacher and she texted me the day before yesterday, because you know her, she teaches in California, in the burbank school district, and the burbank school district, adopted a new social studies textbook, that profiled some historical figures and had the

audacity to include information about whether they were gay. So they had Sally ride, who was the first woman to go into space. And they had Harvey milk, who of course was you know, a big gay rights advocate, who was you know murdered, and in this little you know, social science text for seven year old kids was like “Sally Ride, the first woman and the first lesbian, you know, to go to space,” you know and “Harvey milk, you know, was assassinated, you know first advocacy for gay rights.” That's all it did so she gets these hateful letters from parents who were like “I don't see why my child should be forced to think about sexual practices when reading their social studies, you know curriculum and that the use of the word gay or lesbian was forcing seven year olds to think about sex acts,” and you know, and I mean, even though you could argue that every single time you see a heterosexual couple in a novel or a children's book why aren't the kids being forced to think about heterosexual sex every time to have a mother and father with a baby like what are thinking about penis and vagina? Probably not. And, and I was talking to...my sister and I'm just like you know that that what they are really sort of objecting to is the possibility that this will make it more acceptable, you know, for their kids to be gay themselves like that's what's at the heart of it. So it's kind of ridiculous to get into a discussion with parents like that over whether this textbook is going to influence their sexual development and what's the role of really... You know it's like, I feel like all of that is sort of a side topic to the real issue, which is, is it okay, for your kids to end up kind of queer or trans or is it not. And until we decide as a society that it's okay, then we're going to have these half assed stupid, you know data free debates about the influence of reading the word lesbian on you know, a kid and. Yeah, so. Is it going to make it more likely that a kid realize “oh my God, maybe that's what I am?” yeah sure, and I think that's a good thing, you know, and I guess that's where I differ from most parents. I say let's have as many as as we want to have.

**JC:** Yeah give them options.

**LD:** I know!

**JC:** Yeah!

**LD:** You know what I was saying to my sister I said, you know, there was so much research on how growing up with just the absence of any idea that there's anything to be other than SIS and het, that's what ends up leading to these downstream, you know mental health problems, so you know so yeah maybe a couple of kids will feel a little awkward asking your parents "what is a lesbian?" But that awkwardness is a pretty minor price to pay for the benefit of preventing one or two kids each year from being suicidal you know, five years later, and you have to you have to ask yourself as a society, whether that's worth it to you.

**JC:** Yeah, of course. So why do you think that people connect homosexuality like directly to sex when it's obviously much broader than sex?

**LD:** You know I think part of it is just that we have a pretty sex phobic society and we've we've done a pretty good job of managing to bleach the sets out of otherwise sexy things like marriage and child rearing right it's like no one, you know when. When kids are introduced Oh, this is this is blah blah blah, and this is their husband, no one goes home goes oh my God I use the word husband is my childhood thinking about their teacher, having sex. That because we have such an Anti sex culture that we've managed to take the sex out of a lot of everyday life for so paranoid about it and the simple fact that. You know same gender, sexual expression is different than suddenly makes people aware of the very thing they've been trying so hard to avoid in every aspect of life. You know I wish if we just had a less sex phobic society, I feel like that do a lot of the work, but you know, good luck with that.

**JC:** Right, yeah. So obviously there aren't many options for kids. And you talked about in your Ted talk that sometimes kids at a young age appear to have their sexuality all figured out. Can you talk about like..?

**LD:** Well, I wish I wish you know you know part of my the impetus for writing that talk is you know I just observed over you know, not just as an academic, but just as a queer person in the queer world that we often adopt this notion of oh if it emerged very early in my life, it must be real, and it must be more important and that there's sort of this authenticity Olympics that we play like what I came out when I was five and and those are just folk theories, you know it's back to anthropology it's like America has a sort of folk wisdom that if something shows up early it's more biological. And it's more real than something that emerges later and it's just a pure cultural fiction it's just something that Westerners like to do it's not meaningful at all, and I think that, then that just sets people up to feel really tortured if their sexuality evolves and changes over time, as we know that it does. And and and it's, not just in terms of gender like you know it's so interesting I was talking to a colleague of mine who just retired and he's like 68 and you know he's a gay man and he's like you know, "a bigger transition in my life and coming out as gay, is just getting older and not being all that's actually motivated, you know it's like I love my partners like you know why don't people talk about that you know that?" There are lots of changes and evolutions that we go through as human beings, and why should we apply a different sort of criteria for kind of same gender or other gender attractions or gender expression, then we apply to every other aspect of life that evolves and changes, and I think a lot of people would kind of find it easier to go through their own transitions if if they started out with an appreciation that you know intimacy and sexuality or complex, these are complex human things and there's nothing wrong with whatever you're feeling, you know I think

if we were kind of more open to that, then you know there's probably a lot less anxiety about it all.

**JC:** Yeah do you think that this could lead you into doing research on older populations are you not?

**LD:** Yeah I would love to I get i've so many I get emails from older women, all the time and we're like yeah. "You need to talk to some older women!" I'm like, I do in my social life and like plenty of my like older lesbian friends, but I do think it's you know, and especially I found you know, women who will often come up and talk to me and say you know after like your kids are out of the House and you're kind of, you've checked off all the boxes about what society expects you to do as a woman and you're suddenly free like that cultural permission can be kind of really radical. You know now a lot of people get the horse, you know around that time I think it's a period of of awakening for a lot of individuals and I I would love to do more with that.

**JC:** Um so it looks like we have a question.

**LD:** And now I'm old enough now that I'm 50 I can actually have like the dialogue with other old people, because I feel like, "I'm old too."

**JC:** yeah now you're the same age.

**LD:**...

**JC:** Um so um can you talk to us a little about a little bit about the phenomena of the gaydar.

**LD:** It's so interesting it's changed so much you know. I think all marginalized communities have a deep need for connection with other members of the marginalized group, you know? It's just part of being a stigmatized population and and there's a kind of a million different ways to do it and, and you know I remember you know when I got my job at utah and and felt like I needed to sort of present in a more feminine way. I remember like saying to to do my partner of the time

I'm like. I like I think like when I walk on the street now people think I'm straight like that's disturbing to me like I miss my tribe like I need to be visible to my tribe. So you know I think the cultural codes kind of change over time, you know I think you know gaydar is a very kind of basic kind of social sites, you know phenomenon but. You know, individuals from marginalized communities, I think it's it's a part of what gets us through is being able to find each other and even in unlikeliest of places.

**JC:** Yeah. Um we're gonna move on a little bit again. So do you think that your research or your work has affected your sexual identity? Do you think yours has changed? Have you had any questions?

**LD:** You know it's interesting. People sort of assume that, because I study fluidity, that I'm like a really fluid person, and you know I'm not really. It's like I-I actually you know, have been more of a sort of kind of boring straightforward lesbian. And it's sort of you know, because I've done a lot of research and publication on bisexuality like-like I would get invited to speak at these bisexual conferences and I'd be like {starts whispering} *I-I need you to know that I'm not actually bisexual* {stops whispering}. Is that like okay? Um so you know I actually don't think it's-it's kind of changed my own sexuality as much - um - as much as it just makes me sort of not make assumptions about the people around me, you know? And also I've been - maybe it'd be different if I wasn't in a stable relationship because I've been-I've been with the same woman for 26 years. And so it's hard to know what would be - what would have happened if, say, we broke up and I was on the you know, and I was like looking for another person, so you know so much of my sexuality is focused on her uh that you know that it hasn't necessarily had that much effect on-on me personally, but maybe I'm artificially stable, because I have a really stable happy marriage.

**JC:** What about your gender identity? Has that been -

**LD:** You know. I-I that is sort of interesting. It's like um you know I don't think there's been all that much sort of change, but um as the years have gone by, I'm just sort of more aware of the fact that all of us are just, especially as your body ages and I think aging is a lot to do with it, that um. You know, as you age and a lot of the traditional kind of gender markers in your body undergo change, it just makes me more aware of the fact that. Everything that we think of is natural, is not really natural at all. That we are all sort of you know, are making active choices about, you know, how to sort of present ourselves and. And what aspects of a female or a male body or presentation are comfortable or uncomfortable, and that that is its own sort of evolution, you know over time.

**JC:** Gotcha. And has this, has um your research on female sexuality influenced I mean your career path? Like have you ever thought about anything different or.

**LD:** I haven't really thought about doing anything different, but you know I've become much more interested and sort of doing more community-engaged research. Like I'm doing - I'm involved in a project right now in Salt Lake where we are interviewing Mormon families in Utah with trans or non binary kids and trying to sort of figure out, you know because there's really no space within that faith tradition for gender diversity. It's like it was bad enough for you know queer people, it's even worse for gender diversity. And so the goal of the project is to figure out, you know, how to address some of their faith-specific questions about like, "does this mean my child will not be with me in the afterlife?" and "can I still be a member of my church and choose to love and accept my child's gender identity?" And you know and-and those sorts of projects are really meaningful to me because um, and I don't even care if I ever even publish anything off of that, because these are real people, real families that are hurting and struggling and um. And

being in Utah you know, for the past, you know over 20 years, I've really come to have a real kind of deep sense of-of awareness and empathy for the challenges that are posed by the Mormon church. And I was not raised religious so I-I've never had to struggle with that myself, but it's such a big part of the Utah culture. And it's such a big part of many of my students' lives, you know? And and so I've tried to sort of um to do work that I think can have immediate value and meaning for-for local you know in my community, this is now - I really view Utah and Salt Lake City as my home now. This is my community, and this is a place of-of very deep pain in this community and. And so that's something that's sort of evolved in recent years.

**JC:** Yeah so I'm just curious, how do you go about um answering these people's questions as somebody who-who wasn't raised religious?

**LD:** You know, part of it is I partnered with people who were. Like our research team contains people who-who were raised within that faith, so we kind of know. And at this point, I feel like - my wife jokes, she's like, "you know more about the kind of tenets of the LDS church than like most of the LDS people I know," you know? Because I've-I've. Over the years, I've learned, but a part of it is just partnering with the right people. And-and again, we're going into this project not knowing that the answer is, but we're trying to interview parents who have gone through a transition in their own thinking to figure out well how - what-what helped them make that transition, you know? Like, they started out in a certain place and they ended up in a more accepting place. How did they get there, and how do we, you know? And-and how can we kind of bring that knowledge to more families?

**JC:** Gotcha. Yeah, thank you for that. I have-we have kind of one other question - oh here's a follow up. How can you help children who have come out or transitioned to more religious families?



**LD:** I-you know part of what sort of has emerged, you know in this project, and also with some other work that I'm doing is - Basically it's all about parents. Like if the parents are gonna fuck things up. It-its - parents are so influential. And part of what, in a lot of the work that I'm doing now is trying to sort of get parents to focus on, is that you can you can disagree with what you think is going on for your child. You can have ambivalence about, you know, what's going on. You can not like it. But the first and most important job for any parent is to make their child feel safe. And feeling safe is - it's almost an instinctual, guttural thing. And when a parent says, "okay, I guess we'll go along with this, for now. I'll call you she for now, whatever." They may think to themselves, "well I'm not actively rejecting my child." But that sneering, that sarcasm, the eye-rolling - those are cues that you're not safe. You're not safe in this family. And that is what children need to get through anything like this. And so one of the things that I think in religious families is important is to say, "what do you think? What do you think Heavenly Father thinks your first job as a parent is? It's probably to keep your child safe. So let's focus on that, right now. There will be plenty of time for you to wrangle with the other stuff. But right now, let's focus on what, theoretically, is priority number one, which is making your child feel safe. Because until they feel safe, you can't even have a reasonable conversation about you know what they're wearing or what they're doing." That-that that is a baseline and. So that's a part of what we're sort of working with is, can we get like, no matter what your religious beliefs, you can probably all agree that your number one job as a parent is to make your child feel safe. And even subtle cues of rejection make your child feel unsafe with you, and we know from a lot of research that these tiny cues of unsafety just light up the brain. Just the whole threat system in the brain lights up and so, yeah parent, maybe you didn't take them out of the House, but every time you kind of, you know, expressed that ambivalence, you make that child feel unsafe. And so

why don't we focus on that first, and delay the rest of the stuff until you have a safe-safe home environment.

**JC:** Right yeah, and I assume um mental health comes into that conversation?

**LD:** Oh, my God.

**JC:** I mean the whole conversation.

**LD:** Yeah I mean the rates of um depression. You know it's interesting, I was just writing a review article about this. Major depression is now a bigger health risk to gay men than HIV. That in terms of number of years of life lost? So mental health is health, and the rates of depression and suicidality among queer people, and gender diverse individuals it's even worse, and that's where the intersectionality really comes in. Because the individuals with the poorest mental health of all are queer and trans people who are also suffering from ethnic-racial marginalization, socio-economic marginalization. So these things, you know, are living breathing kind of threats, you know to our community.

**JC:** Yeah, of course. And so have you seen similar things um that you've - like you do a lot of research with females. Have you seen a lot of the same things in males?

**LD:** Yeah totally and I've started to do more research with men as well. And yeah I mean, I think-I think some of the gender differences that I observed early on, they may have been more cultural you know than anything else. I think that you know Rich, my-my you know former advisor, you know published a book on kind of mostly-straight men that, in the same way that you know, when I first started doing my research, I found a lot of women who are sort of like in the boundaries between gay and straight. That's- there's now sort of more visibility and more awareness of that in men as well as women, and so I think that you know a lot of these things

have to do with whether certain cultural ideas are even available to you. Like, can you even imagine yourself in a certain you know fluid space?

**JC:** Right, yeah, of course. And do you ever use like other research that has been done on males to help you with yours on females?

**LD:** Yeah, all the time. Yeah I mean you know I think, again, there's more similarities, you know, then differences in a lot of ways. And you know I think gender is a critical social location in our culture? But it's not the only one, and so I-I find that what I - you know and being a White man in this culture is different from being a Black man, and so you really can't look at gender without you know, looking at these intersectional connections with other social locations.

**JC:** Right. Great Thank you. So we're gonna switch on over to right now. Can you tell us a little bit about what you're doing in regards to teaching?

**LD:** This year I've like-I've been very fortunate. I've been on sabbatical this year, so I have not had to teach at all so. And I was hoping that I would have to - I would have completely missed the whole COVID thing and be able to teach in person in the Fall. But it looks like in the Fall, I will - like the big lecture course that I teach looks like the lecture will be remote and the discussion sections will be in person. So I teach-I teach a huge course called love and relationships which is really just an overview course about the kind of the science and the psychology of close relationships with attachment formation, infant-caregiver bonding, relationships in adolescence and adulthood, couple relationships, marital stability. And so that's always a fun course to teach because I can-I can see the couples, you know, taking the class kind of nudging each other and flirting like as they're taking my class. And so that's you know a lot of fun. I also regularly teach a seminar in gender studies just on basically the science of gender identity and sexual orientation that's sort of like an overview of you know where we're at with

our kind of scientific understanding of those sorts of issues and that's always fun. And that's a smaller class. That's a class that normally has around 30 people. I also co-teach with a very close friend of mine in the history department. We co-teach a course on the history and psychology of the queer family. And she's a historian who studied kind of notions of family and-and I'm a psychologist. And so the-the class kind of veers between historical stuff and psychological stuff. And because we're close friends, we can kind of jab each other like, "well you historians, all you care about -" and like "well you psychologists, if you can't measure something." And so it's a fun course because I think it also provides a perspective for the students that you can have the same topic, and two different disciplines are going to have a totally different approach to that, and neither of them is right or wrong. It's just like again approaching the elephant from different angles. Which, you know, is sort of-kind of core to my interests in sort of-kind of challenging traditional assumptions about scientific knowledge so that's you know, a really, really fun course to teach. I also teach a graduate seminar on the process of scientific writing on how you can write science in a way that is not dry, that is not boring, that has a story and humanity and narrative. And, in some ways, I feel like that's you know the high school part of me that thought I was going to be a creative writer, you know. There are ways to still have creativity and craft in your writing and be a science writer, you know? And it'll typically make for like more enjoyable reading so that is always a really enjoyable course for me.

**JC:** Right yeah. So we've got some people here writing notes to me saying they're interested in taking your classes. Do you know if you'll be teaching your gender study class in the Fall or Spring?

**LD:** I know it's - so in the Fall I'm teaching my love and relationships class, and in the Spring I'm teaching my gender and sexual orientation class. And I love - that class is just always so much fun and I-I love it. And it always draws you know - just folks from all over the university with you know different majors and different backgrounds and-and I love that course.

**JC:** That sounds so fun. Okay, so let's see. Um do you face opposition in the field for wanting to pursue more creative academic writing?

**LD:** You know I-I have - I've felt really fortunate, you know that um I don't think I have. I think it's because - I think it's because I'm a good writer. I think when people read my work and it stretches the boundaries a little bit of what scientific writing is supposed to be like? I often get feedback that's like-like, "wow I can't believe you said that, but you were telling me such a fascinating story I couldn't stop reading." So you know, and that's exactly what I try to teach my students and like. If you want to do risky things, you have to buy yourself that credibility with quality and-and craft, you have to um you know just make it really compelling, and have the highest possible standards. And to me, that is something that's deeply enjoyable and meaningful for me. Some people hate writing. I love it, you know. I-I am at my happiest when I am agonizing over the right way to say something and-and how to make it, you know, compelling. And so I think if you put in the work to-to really treat it like a craft, then you sort of buy yourself a little wiggle room to-to maybe be a little riskier with how you say things.

**JC:** Yeah. So let's see. Do you think that you have to put more effort into buying the credibility to take those kinds of risks as a woman?

**LD:** Um you know, I don't think it's necessarily as a woman. I think, being an academic who studied a marginalized topic was more of an issue. I think, you know, especially when I was younger, there was this sense of like, "oh, you're studying like-like sexual identity. That's like a

niche topic. Like that isn't as hard. It isn't like as serious as some of these other topics." So I think I've bent over backwards to really establish credibility. And so I didn't feel like it was my gender that was a problem, it was my topic of study that was the problem. That it was. And I think that has started to change, but I still think that's true and it's also true, you know. just in the broader field of sexuality research. Anyone who studies anything regarding sexuality, that is still somewhat stigmatized. So I was very aware, you know earlier in my career, that when I was publishing things, I-I didn't submit them to the sexual identity journals or the sexuality journals. I was trying to place my work in mainstream journals to prove that this was mainstream, good, important, scientific work and-and that it can be harder to get into those journals, but I think it does buy you that credibility. To say "hey, this is not just some niche area, this is a really important topic of study." And I sort of feel like I'm at the point in my career now where I have enough of a reputation, where I can relax a little bit about that, and I don't have to worry about it more. But you know I worry about if my students - and you know, and my students are thinking about where to submit things and I'm like, "go for the hardest journal you can go for," because that's how you sort of prove your chops.

**JC:** Yeah. That's-that's a good perspective, I like that. So, speaking of stigma, what have you contributed to help reduce the stigma around sexuality? Or what can other people do? Do you think, or is it totally cultural?

**LD:** You know I think visibility is just a huge thing. And you know, I think, being in Utah has made me very aware of it, you know. From just the beginning of my teaching at you know Utah. And you know, even when I didn't explicitly come out to my students, you know, given the kind of work that I do, that I was kind of known for doing research on kind of queer topics, people just assumed I was a lesbian anyway. So um and-and you know, students would you know email

me and be like, “you are the first lesbian that I saw in person,” and I was like, “happy to help.” But you know it's like things like that I, you know growing up in big cities like Los Angeles, and then going to school in Chicago. You know, I was always aware that gay people existed, you know it was just easier to see them around. When you know, for some of my students who grew up in Salt Lake City or who are raised in the Mormon church, they don't see a lot of that. And I've realized how powerful it can be just to be out and visible. And-and to just you know kind of be your total kind of queer self. And so you know, if anything, over the years, I've tried to be, you know as out and visible as I can, in Utah. And I do a lot of work with you know, community organizations. I do some trainings for the veterans administration on sexuality and gender issues for the kind of the Department of Pediatrics at the hospital. For kind of therapists guilds. Like I've tried to do everything that I could to just sort of raise the visibility about these issues and to make them kind of more normal, you know, here in this little weird pocket of the world.

**JC:** Yeah, of course. Great, well thank you for that. So we're going to move a little bit more into like your career as a professor. So have you noticed any specific gender dynamic in your field, and has it changed as you've gone from assistant Professor to associate to where you are now or?

**LD:** I think one thing that's changed and I've just sort of witnessed it, you know just in the past, you know I've now been at Utah you know for 20 years. Um you know it's odd. It's like, in our department, you know we have pretty much equal number of women, but you know the-the anxiety that assistant professors faced if they were women about having kids was a huge issue. Now that's never been something that personally affected me because I didn't have kids, I didn't want kids you know. I just have dogs. Um but I remember feeling really fortunate that that was not something that I really cared about because you know, it was something that automatically kind of made women viewed as maybe not being as committed enough to their career trajectory,

you know? That hey you just you know because. You know the timing of the academic job cycle does not fit with biological you know anything. There at the time of your life that you're an assistant Professor is when you're - it's the best time for you to have a baby, right? It's the worst time for your career right? Because you're supposed to be churning everything out. And I have to say that in the 20 years I've been at Utah, I've seen a real shift in my own department, but also in the administration, to being um - to not having that count against you sort of psychologically. I think you know, in it, when I was first hired like in the late 90s, I think there was still a sense that, if you were a woman who was going to have a baby, it's just like, "well maybe you're not the go-getter that we thought you were." And I think that's changed, and largely because a lot of the-the most successful women, you know in my department and at the university have had kids and-and I think we're-we're coming to a sort of better place about that. But I think that that is probably the number one obstacle for women in academia is that issue of how to kind of work out that balance. Especially because, you know, even my most progressive male-father friends just don't do as much caregiving as women do. That's just not equal. It just isn't. And so it's always going to be harder on women having young children as assistant professors than men.

**JC:** Yeah. Of course. So we just want to take a second to check and like see if anybody needs a break here. Like water or anything, or are you good?

**LD:** I have my beverage, so I'm good.

**JC:** Okay cool we will keep going then. Awesome. Um so um, why do you think - um okay. Okay, I guess, even if, in your field, it sounds like it's assumed that the woman will be the one taking care of the baby. Do you think that that's different throughout different fields or -?

**LD:** That's a really good question um. I mean I can probably - I think it's probably safe to imagine that in the harder sciences, which tend to be a little more patriarchal, that that norm is



even a stronger expectation, you know? And then in things like business, you know. I think psychology as a profession has a lot more women in it, than in like the hard scientists. And so I think that makes it a little easier, so I think a lot of it has to do with whether it's a profession that has a lot of women in it to begin with.

**JC:** Yeah. Makes sense. Um so how do you balance being supportive and encouraging to other people in the field with being competitive?

**LD:** You know for me that's I mean I-I am, that has never been an issue for me, I have never I've never felt that-that anyone's success was ever a threat to my own. That's just like I can't even like - I can't even imagine that way of thinking. And maybe that's different you know. I think, in a field like psychology it's like you know it's not like we're trying to discover the structure of DNA like something like, "oh no I'm going to make this huge discovery." It's like - you know I always joke, that the kinds of discoveries that we make in psychology are things that everybody already knows like, "Bad parenting produces bad kids! Oh my God, like what a discovery!" So I think a lot of what we're doing is just fleshing out things that we already know so I've never-I've never - that's just never been a thing for me.

**JC:** Good, well that's good to hear. Um so, as a tenured professor, what are your thoughts on the system there? How did it go for you?

**LD:** You know it went fine for me, but you know I have a lot of - I mean it's such a freaking weird system. I mean who came up with this? Now, to some degree, I-I've been more aware of how it has privileged me during the pandemic than ever before. Because I never had to worry about my job. I knew that I was fine, you know? And seeing how many people had their lives upended by the pandemic really made me aware of just the immense privilege of-of academia. Um and that really does not exist in like any other industry. It's-it's kind of crazy um. I-I've had

the opportunity to serve on a couple of different kind of committees at the university like. All universities have sort of review committees that if there's a dispute in a department about whether someone should get tenure, there are these upper level review committees that look at the case and-and I've served on those committees and so I've had a chance to sort of see how the process works across the whole university. And [short pause] it is just a deeply fucked up system. I mean I-I am so glad that I have tenure, but I have so much ambivalence about its existence. Um I think my department does a really professional job of it. But you know when I read you know, having a chance to review how other departments do it. You know, in many ways, adults are just bigger bodied third graders, and all the same human frailties you know that we all carry around, I feel like the tenure system allows them to kind of flourish and. And I think that the university systems are not very good at finding ways to reward scholarship that may look a little different from what they're used to. You know, that may have a different sort of trajectory. Scholarship that takes longer or that's more community-engaged, or that doesn't yield the same number of publications. It's like there's a certain model of what success looks like at the university, and-and as much as people like to talk about being inclusive and representing diverse forms of scholarship, when it comes down to it, when people produce knowledge that doesn't fit the mold that they're used to, it's really hard to get that work acknowledged and validated.

**JC:** Yeah, of course, and do you think that um different departments handle it differently, like?

**LD:** Yeah and some - to some degree, that's part of the problem, because different departments can have totally different standards and-and I, you know-you know when I used to always talk to my-my good friend, just in the history department about kind of what the kind of process was, and it became obvious that like the process in my department was really kind of mature and responsible and a lot of information-sharing, and that the processing in in her department was

like messed up and I was like, “oh my God, how can you people allow that to happen?” She's like, “that's just the way it is.” So that's part of the problem is that every department is allowed to be their own little fiefdom and to just kind of, you know. And every department has its own politics and its own dynamics, and one of the reasons I've stayed at Utah my whole career is I just think that this department just has a sort of a high bar of mental health. That there just has never been a lot of politics. I have always felt unbelievably supported for the type of work that I do and-and that my colleagues, even if they didn't understand it, were actually curious about it. And that is not always the case, you know. And so I feel like I kind of lucked out in a lot of ways, because I just - my department is kind of very mentally healthy and really responsible. And there are plenty of departments that just are not.

**JC:** Right well-well that's good to hear. I'm glad to hear that was so positive for you though. Um so let's see um. Have there been any expectations that you had about your career that you've found that have been different?

**LD:** That's a really -

**JC:** In a good or bad way.

**LD:** Now that's a really good question um you know I-I definitely thought earlier on, you know what. You're definitely expected as a young Assistant Professor, to get big federal grants, you know? An NIH grant or an NSF grant. And-and I got a tiny, you know, NIH grant you know, like early in my career and, you know, norm- those are normally viewed as like stepping stones to what's called an R01, you know, like a big five year multimillion dollar grant. And given that the kind of work that I do just doesn't really lend itself to like these high dollar can - I just was just - I have been completely unsuccessful and people often are surprised. They're like, “oh my God you're so-you're so established, you must have so many grants”. I'm like, “never i've had no you

know NIH funding, no NSF funding. They have not been interested in funding my work. I've had to get these tiny grants, one after another". And, you know, there was a point in time, where I was like, "Oh, if I just got- just keep-", but I would find that I was distorting, you know, the work I wanted to do just to see if I can make it fit the funding profile. And finally, at a certain level, you know, I think it was around the time that-that I got promoted to full Professor, and-and I, I said to my wife, I'm like, "you know, I don't really want to do, like a big multimillion dollar like I don't want to do that, like I'm fine doing these smaller projects with smaller amounts of funding like I'm okay like, and you know i've reached I'm like I don't want to do that anymore like I-I can't and I'm not interested". And she was like, "good for you", so I think at some point, I thought that that was just the only way to be successful is to bring in like a you know-like a you know, \$4 million grant. And it-it was really liberating to be like, you know, the academia is so messed up in so many ways. The only benefit of academia is that you are getting paid to answer the questions you want to answer and to do the work you want to do. And I finally said to myself, "you know what, I'm allowed to do that, I'm allowed to do the work that I want to do, even if I have to scrape by and I, you know, don't have a lot of money to, you know, pay people. I've been able to kind of squeak by up until now and that's just fine and, you know, that kind of work can be just as scientifically meaningful as, you know, bringing in kind of big money. So I reached a lot of peace once I sort of like had that conversation with myself like, "it's okay, Lisa, you've done enough; you're going to be okay well, you know, you're-you're secure, you can have, you know, you can have a like a smaller scale with search profile and still do meaningful science".

**JC:** Yeah, and before you had that conversation with yourself, did that affect your home life at all?

**LD:** Um, I don't think it affected my home life. It's just was always stressing me out, you know, because I, I would try and, you know, and I, I really gave it my all. I really kind of did my job, trying to find opportunities that worked with my interest, but they just never worked out, and I would often find that after I didn't get a grant, I'd be kind of relieved because I'm like that isn't really a project that I wanted to do anyway. So, you know, I, I think one of the - kind of - sticky things about academia is that the pressures on faculty to get research funding have gotten more pronounced, and I feel very fortunate to be at the age that I am and-and my level of seniority in the department because I think those pressures on younger faculty Member are very, very intense, and I, I do not envy them.

**JC:** Gotcha. Yeah, um, okay, so... let's see... Have you ever faced the stigma of “soft sciences” versus “hard sciences”?

**LD:** Totally. All the time, all the time. I mean, and, you know, i-it's amazing I often think that, you know, when I-I'll be reading like some article and I'd be like, “Okay, this is a relatively straightforward topic”, and the authors are trying to make it sound more science-y than it actually is. And I'm like, “grow up, everybody, it's-it's okay”. Like, this is psychology it's, you know, it's not physics and that's okay, so I do think that there is that physics envy in the field of psychology in general. And especially if you're studying marginalized populations at all, like, that's just viewed as being less rigorous and, um, you know, it-it-at this point, it doesn't bother me anymore because, you know, because I feel passionate about what I do, but it did give me more grief, when I was younger.

**JC:** Yeah, and how did you deal with that?

**LD:** Well, I would, you know, what my, you know, ment- you know, Rich would always say, you know, “the way to convince people is to make sure that you are grounding what you are doing in

something in a-in a-in a rigorous tradition that's already familiar to them, you know, that science is all about adding something new to something old and-and making sure to frame what you're doing within a larger body of theory and science, so that it can make sense”, and, um, and I think that was really good advice and that's the advice I give my own students.

**JC:** Oh, good. That was my next question - is what advice did you have for any students? Um, cool, so we are gonna move on a bit again. Um, so we watched your TED Talk and we had questions, um, about that. So first, how did you become a speaker?

**LD:** You know, they put out a call for the-the local Salt Lake City; they put out a call every year, and they sort of announced the theme, and, you know, and I was just like, you know, “well, hey, why not?”, and, you know, so it was just a sort of random thing. I mean, I had been sort of passionate about that topic for a while and I wanted to find a way to sort of discuss it within a broader audience because I've written about it, you know, academically, um, and it was just so good opportunity to sort of take that idea and take that-that concept and find a way to sort of communicate it to more general audience.

**JC:** Gotcha. Yeah, and how was the experience, um, both like, um, applying and actually giving the TED Talk?

**LD:** It was a, it was a tremendous amount of fun. I mean, here in Salt lake at least, they have a really great program where, like, all the speakers kind of meet together every couple of weeks, we share drafts of the talks, we get feedback, you get sort of coaching. So it was like a little family I...It was a, it was a really positive experience and, um, ah, and, you know, I have a background in-in theater and so, you know, that sort of thing is never kind of, you know, given me any anxiety. It's sort of like teaching, you know so, um, so that part was perfectly comfortable, and it was just really great to have a, a little cohort where-where we all gave each

other really good feedback and that-that just made it a really, a really kind of meaningful experience.

**JC:** Yeah, oh, yeah. Um, cool, um, could you distill what you believe should replace the “Born This Way” understanding of sexuality?

**LD:** It should be: Who cares? Who the Hell cares? It should be like, you know, embracing, like, diversity and all of its forms, you know. When-when you go into a garden, and you see black eyed susans and tulips and roses, you don't say, “I want to understand exactly how the rose evolved differently from the black eyed susan, and why the petals are shaped differently and-”. No, you go into that garden, and you were like, “oh my God, look at the splendor, look at the beauty”, and that is what, you know, I, I, I wish people could get to. You know, as a scientist, I'm very interested in how sexual orientation develops, but that's a scientific question that should not be the concern of, you know, people making public policy. You know, we should just accept human diversity, love it, embrace it, and-and support it.

**JC:** Yeah, and were there any, um, other opportunities that arose after doing the TED Talk?

**LD:** Um, not necessarily. I mean, random people will email me periodically and, sometimes, with positive things to say, and, sometimes, not so positive things to say it, but you know...

**JC:** Yeah, okay, cool. Um, let's see, we're gonna move on again. Um, right now, or anytime, um, have you ever mentored anyone, um, or have you had, like, research assistants or undergraduates?

**LD:** I've had tons. I mean, probably my closest relationships are with my graduate students because that process is like a 5-6 year kind of intense, you know, working relationship, um, and, um, and I've really, I've really, really treasured those relationships because, you know, I, for me the thing that really made it possible to get through graduate school was having such good

relationships with my-my own mentors, and so I try to, you know...In the past, I used to feel bad about the fact that I was a little bit kind of too nurturing and too forgiving that, you know, they couldn't meet a deadline, I'm like, "that's okay, you know to hurt me", but, you know, I finally sort of just came to realize, you know, that's just who I am. I'm, I'm not a hard ass. Um, I have high standards, but, um, you know, I don't think, you know, there's some, there's some faculty were like, "Well, I suffered in graduate school, so my students should suffer; the suffering is a part of what makes you a good scientist". I think that's bullshit. I don't think anyone needs to suffer, and so I tried to create a, um, very supportive and warm kind of climate for my students.

**JC:** Cool, and are you doing any research right now?

**LD:** Yeah I'm doing - So, one of the projects I'm doing is that project with the Mormon families of kind of queer and trans youth. I'm doing another big project, where we are looking at, um, sort of relationships between day-to-day experiences of stigma and feelings of social safety with markers for systemic inflammation, which is a marker of immune system functioning. There's a lot of research showing that when people feel chronically rejected, chronically judged, and don't feel safe with social partners, their body treats that as an actual physical threat. And that these, and you'll get this elevated inflammation in your body that leads to huge health risks down the line. And, uh, people have not really devoted a lot of attention to this in queer and trans population, so my students and I are getting a big sample of queer and trans folks here in Salt Lake City and getting a lot of information about their background, their day-to-day experiences of-of social rejection, and social support, and then getting blood samples for their inflammation, so we can see if being stigmatized, you know, has an observable effect on your physical health.

**JC:** And has the pandemic affected any of that?



**LD:** It definitely did. It sort of put everything on hold for a while, but then we found out that, you know, really none of our data collection, you know, really needed people to be in person like so. The blood collection we do; people just basically prick their own little finger and then put a couple of drops of blood on this special card, and we realized, you know, we mail people the card, show them how to do it on a video, and then we just picked it up from their house, so it took a while for us to figure out kind of how to get things up and running again, but we were, we were able to figure it out.

**JC:** Oh, good. That makes it easy to just mail it in. Um, cool, um, so do you...or would you be interested in implementing narratives into sexual fluidity?

**LD:** When you say imp-, because, like, narratives are already kind of in-in my works on what do you, what do you mean specifically?

**JC:** Um, does anybody have an answer to that? Who wrote that question? Do we know? Um, let's see...

**CP:** Hi, sorry that was me that asked it. Um, I'm the research assistant for Monisha Pasupathi's lab, and so we're doing narratives. And I was wondering if you would be interested in doing, like, narratives with sexual fluidity - just asking your participants to write it out and then, uh, dissecting those narratives into that?

**LD:** You know, it was interesting...I actually - she and I had started a project a number of years ago that we never sort of finished up on because one of the things that I had noticed in my interview research on sexual fluidity was that when I asked women to sort of tell the story of how they first started to question their identity. You know, when I would interview them later over time and ask them the same question, they didn't tell the same story. The story kind of changed and so I was like, "Monisha, we should do a whole project on like, you know", and-and,

you know, so I ended up collecting data on like the ways in which the narratives changed, but I never ended up actually publishing anything on that, but, you know, I mean, my whole project was so narratively based. It was really about, you know, how people were making meaning of their own kind of sexual development for themselves and then kind of bumping up against whether that story fit the story that the culture was telling about, you know sexuality, so, you know that sort of approach has been sort of threaded through, you know, almost everything that I do.

**JC:** Cool, yeah. Thank you. I think that answered it pretty well. Not to speak for Charlotte, but, um, so do you have any in near future plans or future plans - I guess at all - to write another book or?

**LD:** Oh, everyone asks me, "do you want to write another book?" I'm like, "I don't, you know, right now, you know". I mean, I could because I did collect the 20 year follow ups on my sample, and the first book was 10 years. But the thing is I'm not sure, like, It would sound all that different or would, you know, be a very different story, so right now I'm, you know. I'll be like I'll write a book if the urge strikes me, but, right now, I feel, you know, I feel fine.

**JC:** Yeah that's fair. Would you, like, consider articles instead or?

**LD:** Oh yeah. I mean, I'm always writing articles, you know, um and, uh, yeah, so...

**JC:** Cool. Awesome. I think we are getting close to our end here. Um, I'm gonna have to look at this for one second. [short pause] Cool. I think, I think we got them all unless anybody else has any follow up questions?

**KM:** There's some more on the next page.

**JC:** There's some more? Cool. Um, we got...[short pause] Um, there's a question from - I think - Cullen. So, are there any stigmas that you've maybe come across about bisexuality? I know we've talked about like lesbian and gay, but can you talk about that a little bit more?

**LD:** Yeah, I mean I, that's like, you know, um...oh, wait, sorry my dog wants to come into the room and if I, if I deny her, she'll-she'll suffer. [Talking to dog: Come here, baby, come on. Yes. Come by, baby. Yeah. Okay. Yeah ] This is Tippa. [Talking to dog: (mumbles incoherently)...you're so sweet.] Um, you know, bisexuality has, you know, is-is so widely considered sort of illegitimate and, you know, I've become aware over the years the degree to which, you know, being a, being a lesbian grants me a certain amount of privilege that bisexuals don't have. It's like people just denigrate them as, like, confused or, you know, curious or whatever. Um, and, you know, when I first started doing my research, people thought that there were very few bisexuals, that they didn't really exist. And I was like, "I don't know because I keep coming across them in my own research", and now, you know, the survey data suggests that they are by far the largest sort of category of queer people of all. So it's amazing that even though, you know, they're a larger and larger and more visible group, our society still has a tendency to denigrate them and, um, I, I think it just shows kind of how-how deep, um, a lot of that-that sort of, you know, you know, suspicion like, you know, but then I, I think that often that it's motivated like, "whoa, wait a second. If-if it's actually possible to be attracted to both, you know, to more than one gender, then like, oh my God, then maybe I'm in that category, too, right?" I think people find it, like, personally threatening, so I think that that Stigma is just a huge one and, um, and, and very troubling.

**JC:** Right, of course, and, um, kind of relating that, too, is, like, what about asexuality?

**LD:** Yeah, you know, I don't...I have only recently begun to sort of get more upstate on that. Um, and I think it's a really important conversation and something we sort of know less about, so um, I, I, I you know, again if we're going to be serious about diversity, we really need to-to mean diversity in all of its forms, and I, I totally think that that counts.

**JC:** Right yeah, of course. Cool. Um, I think another one that's kind of back to being, like, super broad, um, is, “are there any events that you can recall where maybe gender has limited your experience or opportunities or somebody else's”?

**LD:** Um, you know I remember in the, in the, you know, I think in my first year of college um...it...because I went to an all girls' high school. Um, so when I went to college, it was like the first time I had sort of an academic environment with, like, both men and women. And, uh, I remember, you know, like one of the first kind of classes in...that the Professor was asking...he was like, “Ah, I need, I need two students to volunteer to give a brief presentation, you know, the next class. One of them will just be a basic kind of summary of what the article said and the other one will really kind of think more in depth about, you know, blah blah blah”. It was very clear that, like, one of them was going to be, like, a low, like, low status and the other one's a high status. And I raised my hand to volunteer, as did, like, some other guy. And he immediately turned to me, he's like, “okay, so you'll do the-the summary”, and then he turns to the guy and he's like, “now, you'll do the one after that”. And I was like, “Uh, is that sexism?” Like, because I never had to sort of deal with it personally because I went to an all girls' school. And I was just like, “oh my fucking God, like, are you are, you fucking kidding me?”. So, you know, I think, in general I've, I've had a lot of privilege and I haven't, you know, had to deal with a lot, but it made me very acutely aware of the fact that, like, I think that's alive and well. Um, yeah...

**JC:** Yeah, and do you think that your, um, experience at an all girls' school, like, kind of fueled your interest to where you are now or did it? Or was it?

**LD:** Um, I don't know. I mean, it's hard know. It's, like, you know, you can't go back and rewind time. Um, you know, one of the sort of side effects of going to an all girls' school is just gender becomes less important. You know, you actually spend less time thinking about your gender because it's just not, you know, an issue. Um, I didn't even really start identifying as a feminist until probably, like, my senior year. Um, you know, so, in some ways, you're in kind of a protective bubble and you're not that, you know, you can, you can afford not to be really aware of sexism because you're in this little protective kind of same gender environment bubble.

**JC:** Yeah, okay. That makes sense. Cool. Um, so what do you think was the toughest phase of - I guess - your life or your academic career there?

**LD:** [big sigh]

**JC:** And how did you cope with it?

**LD:** You know, I think being on the job market. You know, it...the uncertainty, um, of just literally having no idea - you fly to some university, you're meeting with people all day long, you're giving a talk, you're trying to imagine like, "do I want to be here? Like, is this where I'm gonna spend the rest of my life?" It's, you know, it was so anxiety producing. I remember, like, I broke out, and I'm like, "oh, right, now I look like a teenager because I have, like, pimples" because it was just so anxiety producing. Um, that-that is just...it's a horrible process. Like, the academic job market is a horrible thing.

**JC:** Yeah, can't imagine. Um, let's see. Um, so I guess one of our last questions here is "what's the most exciting or promising development in your field, what should we be looking for here?"

Lisa Diamond: Well, you know, the...what I was talking about earlier about, kind of, social safety, that's something my students and I've spent a lot of time thinking and writing on. That, you know, I think a lot of research on queer and trans folks has talked about the-the stress that is added from stigma, you know, minority stressors - being discriminated against, being treated differently - and has not talked enough, and so, like those are all the things that stigma adds to your life that are bad for you. And we haven't talked enough about what stigma takes away from your life. In terms of that basic feeling of safety and security, that you're always on guard you're always monitoring, you're, like, is this, is this a person I can talk-? Can I talk about my wife with this person? Can I, like, move? And that-that is a-a more invisible, insidious effect of stigma, and that, and again, like, that may provide a different way to talk about interventions, you know. Um, you know, I was talking to, you know, some students about this, and they were like, you know, "now people are adding their pronouns to their email, you know, signatures, and, you know, my pronouns are not that important to me, so, like, why should I add them?" And I said, "it's a safety signal. It's just a safety signal. It's a way to say to a person, "I get it. I get it. You're safe with me. You can tell me that"." And I think once you reframe things, you know, from the issue of stress to the issue of safety, that I think it changes the way you go about trying to create an inclusive environment. Because it makes you realize that even someone who has never been actively discriminated against, can feel chronically unsafe. And-and that is going to hurt their life, and so our goal should not just be to remove explicit discrimination but to amplify social safety. And that's a part of what good laws and policies do. You know, if you have an anti-discrimination policy at your workplace, that's a, that's a safety signal that says, "you can work here. We get you, you know. We get all of you". And-and so my students and I are-kind of working with this idea more and-and trying to play out like, you know, how-how might this change our

approaches to working with youth or to working with families if we, if we moved away from talking about stress and move toward talking about safety?

**JC:** Good, yeah. Awesome. Let's see, um, so if you could do everything over again, would you choose the same path for yourself, or would you change anything?

**LD:** You know, I'm so, I'm, you know... Yeah, I think I would, I would do it all over again, even with all the mistakes because I am really happy right now. I, I love my job, I love my students, I love what I'm kind of working on, and writing, and, um, and everything feeds forward. Right? I couldn't have ended up here if everything else didn't kind of work out the way it did so, um, You know, I have no, I have no regrets.

**JC:** Awesome. Cool. Well, I think that about wraps it up. we're going to be done a little bit early, but we appreciate you being flexible with us.

**LD:** Thanks so much.

**JC:** Yeah, thank you for being here. Um, does anybody have any additional thoughts, comments, questions? Are we good?

**LD:** These were great questions.

**JC:** Cool. Yeah, thank you, um, for being here. Um, Did, Kaylee, did you get the waivers and everything?

**KM:** Yeah, she only had to sign the online thing, so that should be good.

**JC:** Cool. Awesome. Great. Cool. Well, thank you again. Enjoy your day.

**LD:** All right. Good luck, everybody!

**CO & CP:** Thank you!

**LD:** Bye bye.

**KM:** bye bye.