

Interviewee: Dr. Christine Corley

Interviewer: Emily Santoro & Stephanie Pantera

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Transcriber: Stephanie Pantera

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Abstract: Dr. Christine Corley was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1986. She grew up in Reading, Massachusetts with her parents, two sisters, and brother. Dr. Corley is affiliated with Worcester because it is where her job is located. She is employed at the Hearing and Balance Center of New England, as an audiologist. Dr. Corley received her undergraduate education at the University of Massachusetts and attended graduate school at Northeastern University. It was at Northeastern University where she attained her doctoral degree of audiology. Dr. Corley described the challenges she faced when in school and how she overcame those obstacles. Dr. Corley recognizes the importance of maintaining connections you make in college because they could be beneficial to your future. The doctor loves her job and emphasizes the sense of reward she feels when helping her clients. In this interview, Dr. Corley also discusses her family, education, work experience, political/community involvement and health. One point that Dr. Corley emphasized was that women should not feel pressured into getting married and having children. However, Dr. Corley does have plans to start a family of her own one-day.

ES: Hi I'm Emily Santoro. We are completing a citywide oral history of the lives of Worcester women, aiming to collect stories about a broad range of experiences. Based on the goals of the 1850 National Women's Right Convention in Worcester, we are focusing on the areas of women's education, health, work, and politics and community involvement. We want to focus today on your experiences with audiology. Thank you for your help in this important project. Can we have your permission to record and type these questions?

CC: Yes.

ES: Okay, what is your full name including both maiden name, married name...oh and married name?

CC: I'm not married, so Christine Meghan Corley, is my full name.

ES: Okay, and when were you born?

CC: [] 1986.

ES: Okay...do you have any children?

CC: Nope, no children.

ES: Okay...what cultures or ethnicities do you identify with?

CC: Caucasian, that's it.

ES: Do you have any family background that's...

CC: Oh, I guess Irish, Irish and Italian, but much more Irish, our family...I still have family in Ireland, so we are still pretty close with.

ES: Can you tell me a little bit about your parents?

CC: My parents, my dad was born and raised in Boston, in the city, my mom grew up in New Jersey. They went to college together up at St. Anselm in New Hampshire. That's where they met, so they've been married for like, thirty, thirty-five years this upcoming April...yeah (Laughs).

ES: What did they do?

CC: My dad was a teacher, he taught high school for over thirty years, he retired a couple years ago and my mom is a nurse practitioner, she works at the (_____) in Boston

ES: Where have you lived during your life? Did you grow up in Worcester? And if so, what neighborhood?

CC: No, I grew up in Reading, which is a little bit north of Boston, I've been in Massachusetts my whole life, I lived out in Amherst for a little while, I live in Boston in Dorchester now, and I work in Worcester.

ES: What was your neighborhood like growing up?

CC: Small, a lot of kids, a lot of kids my own age, my parents still live in the house I grew up in, so I'm still around there a lot, you know... a typical Massachusetts suburban town.

ES: It asks how did you come to live in Worcester, but you said work... so you just commute here?

CC: Yeah I just commute here, yeah.

ES: Okay...so you've never moved if your parents still live... in the same house? Have you ever moved?

CC: I moved in Reading when I was in second grade, but then I moved myself.

ES: Okay...Right.

CC: I don't live at home anymore [Laughs]

ES: Do you have any siblings?

CC: I have two sisters and a brother.

ES: Do they live around here?

CC: Yes, they all live—my two sisters live in Reading with their families and my brother lives in Waltham.

ES: What challenges do you think this city still faces? And what would you change about Worcester?

CC: I mean from my experience, I don't live here obviously, but we actually do a ton of work within the community, it seems like there are a lot of people, I mean it may also be the population that I work with, but there are a lot of older people who are proud of their city, and were born and raised around here, but it doesn't seem like that neighborhood feel is still around, it doesn't seem like—it's a young city in the fact that there is a lot of college kids, but it doesn't seem like a city where a lot of young families come and want to raise their kids here.

ES: What do you think we could change about the city, to make it more welcoming?

CC: I don't know, from everything that I hear from people that have lived here for a long time, seems like all of Shrewsbury Street and all of those restaurants, and it's getting a little more welcoming and more to do. I don't know, it could just be a little bit more aesthetically pleasing. There are some parts of Worcester that are a little bit...[Laughs]

ES: Agreed [Laughs]

CC: Run down, not the nicest parts that you feel most comfortable driving through I guess [Laughs]

ES: What changes have you seen in Worcester over your time here? You can say opening those places [Laugh]

CC: I mean obviously we deal with an elderly population for most of the people we work with. Something that we work with is a community-based group called Senior Focus where they

provide all sorts of information on health care and how to deal with getting older and that is something I've never heard of, I mean I've worked in Boston and never heard of anything like that so I think that's a pretty cool thing to give information to seniors and resources.

ES: Yeah that is cool and I see the buses that bring them around town.

CC: Yeah there are a lot of resources for elderly people around here, which I think is awesome. There is a lot of people that are willing to help.

ES: What distinct characteristics make Worcester the place that it is?

CC: I don't really know...

ES: For you it's probably the people.

CC: For me, yeah it's the people. I mean like I said I get that feel when I first started seeing patients here, people who were born and raised here did not want to leave they love their neighborhoods and their town and they don't want to go far.

ES: What do you think women's experiences in Worcester have been generally?

CC: I would hope positive, I mean obviously it's a city that there is a lot of colleges, a lot of education, which I think is a good thing. I mean there's a lot of women professionals around here that we work with so that's always a good thing.

ES: Speaking about schools, where did you attend school? Undergrad and graduate.

CC: I went to UMASS [University of Massachusetts] Amherst for undergrad and Northeastern University for grad school

ES: And can you name the programs that you were involved in?

CC: Yeah at UMASS I was a communication sciences and disorders and then at Northeastern I was doctor of audiology program.

ES: What were your challenges with education? If any? [Laughs]

CC: I don't know, I think...I got better grades in college than I did in high school, which was...[Laughs]

ES: It's reverse [Laughs]

CC: Yeah, I learned how to study and found something that I actually liked, you know it's never easy to be in classes and have a lot of work. but...

ES: Did you ever go to tutoring or like group study sessions?

CC: I mean I had tutoring for SATs in high school. In grad school actually it's a pretty scientific-based doctorate program and I struggled a little bit in the advanced hearing sciences, I had a lot of visits, one on one with professors, I remember that.

ES: Whatever works [Laughs]

CC: I graduated! [Laughs]

SP: What made you choose communication disorders?

CC: I worked, in high school.... in the beginning of college at a summer camp for special needs kids, so I worked with a lot of SLPs and it was just I always knew I wanted to do something in like the health care realm. I kind of always thought about nursing but the more I worked alongside SLPs I liked what they did. So then once I got into that, I liked the ear stuff more than the speech stuff.

SP: That's funny because I was going back and forth between nursing and communication disorders...

CC: When I applied to UMASS, for undergrad I got accepted into the nursing program and I switched out after my first semester, because it wasn't exactly what I wanted to do.

ES: Yeah you gotta love it.

CC: Yeah.

ES: If you're going for it. Upon finishing your formal education, what did you see as your options?

CC: Well, I mean, picking the field of audiology is pretty, it's a pretty like one-way road.

ES: Yeah, yeah.

CC: I mean there obviously are, like any other health care, there are different types of environments you can work in...

ES: Did you aim to work with older people and like hearing aids? Or did you ever think about early intervention or like babies and cochlear implants?

CC: Yes, when I was in my 3rd year of grad school I had my internship at Children's Hospital in Boston, for two semesters and I loved it. I still love to work with pediatrics.

ES: I love babies [Laughs]

CC: Yeah [laughs], but I started off my first year out of grad school was at an ENT practice in Boston, and that was a lot more of just medically diagnosing hearing loss, and treating balance disorders and now I've been here at a private practice since we've opened, so almost two years and I like it. It's definitely different. You get to know your patients a lot better because you're seeing them consistently and its nice. I like that part of it.

ES: What support networks and mentoring have been important to you?

CC: I mean someone like Keith, Dr. Darrow, your professor. He was my first professor in grad school and I've always kept in touch with him after and it's always good to have those people... to kind of guide you.

ES: Would you consider him a mentor? [Laughs].

CC: Yeah, I would [Laughs]. He's my mentor and my boss.

ES: Family too?

CC: What was that?

ES: Family too?

CC: Yeah of course, my mom and sister are both in health care and they're always helpful to talk to. My sister, she was a nurse and then went back to school to get her master's for NP [Nurse Practitioner] a couple years before I did, so having someone else who just went through going to grad school is helpful too, to ask those types of questions.

ES: Especially with applying.

CC: Yes! Applying is the worst part. It really is.

ES: [Laughs] Okay so moving onto work, what was your first job?

CC: My first job ever?

ES: Sure!

CC: My first job ever was delivering newspapers in my neighborhood, yes. [Laughs]

ES: Classic. Okay so then what was your first job in audiology?

CC: First technical job in audiology where I was actually getting paid was at the ENT practice in Boston.

ES: Okay, what other jobs have you had and what do you do now? Well we know you used to be newspaper...

SP: Well what other jobs did you have in between that?

CC: Oh gosh a million!

SP: Oh really?! [Laughs]

ES: [Laughs]

CC: I always worked, I worked at an indoor kids' play ground, I worked at my church in like the...

ES: Did you have a job while in college?

CC: Yup, I worked in...I had two jobs in college, I worked for the food services...

ES: Like on campus? Yeah.

CC: ...and I also was a PCA for a girl who was a quadriplegic, so lived in the dorms. So I did that for another two years.

ES: PCA is a personal care assistant?

CC: Yeah

SP: That's a cool job.

ES: Yeah, that is a cool job.

SP: I don't think we have anything like that at Assumption.

CC: Yeah, she lived—they had a special dorm at UMASS that was...

SP: I've heard of someone doing that.

ES: I did a UCONN (University of Connecticut) youth leadership program with all high schoolers that had special needs and I was a personal care assistant, but it's tiring.

CC: Yeah it's not an easy job. I mean I said before I worked...

ES: I mean you have to like really want to do it.

CC: Yeah it's not easy, I worked with special needs kids in summer camps and whenever I was home for break. At UMASS we had eight-week long winter breaks.

ES: Right.

CC: And it's awesome and it's a really rewarding job, but it's really hard.

ES: It's tiring, I mean you are their arms, legs and whatever you need them to be for however long. [Office phone begins to ring] Showering them and you feel like a mom. Mine was only for a week so props [Laughs]. What has this work meant to you?

CC: My job now, I mean I love it. I love seeing patients every day. It's fun to see new people all day long and the majority of them are really nice and [I] can have nice conversations with people. And the nice thing about what we do is for a majority of our patients, you are actually having a positive effect on their life, you're changing their life for the better, you're helping them hear better, you're helping them communicate so most of the time people are happy when they come in and see you, not all of the time, but most of the time, so that's a good thing.

SP: Do any kids come in here?

CC: Yeah.

SP: Oh really?

CC: Yeah, I mean a majority of people we see are older and have hearing loss, but I had three kids in this morning. A 3 year old, a 9 year old, and I think she's 7 years old...so yeah. Those are fun too, they're cute.

ES: Yeah, I'm sure they're all happy to be here.

CC: The 3 year old is really hard to test...

ES: (_____???)

CC: Yes. [Laughs]

ES: I can only imagine. What were your primary responsibilities in terms of housework? Like at your...probably when you were growing up, like did you have chores?

CC: Yeah....yeah.

[All laugh]

ES: Cleaning dishes?

CC: Like everything; we never got an allowance growing up.

ES: Did you and your siblings split the chores?

CC: We did anything that our parents told us to do.

ES: Yeah.

CC: I don't...

ES: Are you the youngest?

CC: The youngest, yeah.

ES: So did they have to babysit you?

CC: Yup [laughs] all the time.

ES: Okay, so you live on your own now?

CC: I live with my boyfriend.

ES: Okay so do you have...do you have housework at home? Cleaning? Cooking?

CC: Yeah, I like to cook, so I cook a lot.

SP: What's your favorite thing to cook?

CC: Oh jeez, I don't know. I like to try new stuff, I don't like to just make...

ES: Are you a Googler of a recipe and your just like yup that's it for tonight.

CC: Yeah.

ES: [Laughs] That's what my mom's like.

CC: I like to kind of just throw...

ES: Oh you wing it.

CC: I wing it a little bit too. With adapting what I like in it. I actually have veggie chili that I made in the crockpot this morning, I can't wait to go home and try it.

SP: That sounds really good.

CC: I hope it's really good. I was texting Chris right before you guys got here and said, "Is it good?" and he said, "I don't know it's too hot". [Laughs]

SP: Cooking is a gift, I don't have it, I need to work on it [Laughs]

ES: So it asks if you share this with anyone, so your boyfriend.

CC: Mhm.

ES: Has this changed for you over time?

CC: Yeah, I mean the older you get the more independent you get and when I was in college, I lived off campus in an apartment with four other girls for 2 years. We didn't do much cleaning or cooking there. I live a little bit more cleaner and normal life now.

ES: It's a lot easier when it's only your things.

CC: Yeah.

SP: Was that as grad students, you guys lived together?

CC: No at UMASS after your sophomore year, you were highly encouraged to move off campus.

SP: Really?

CC: They didn't have enough housing for everyone. So there was a ton of off campus apartments that are right on the edge of campus

ES: So close, but yeah.

CC: It was awesome. [Laughs] It was fun.

ES: How have you balanced different priorities, responsibilities, roles, and interests in your life?

CC: I try and work is obviously something you spend a lot of time doing, and you're here a lot, but I try really hard to leave work in work hours. I have a big family and I have a lot of friends who still live in the area, so just trying to make time on weekends for...

ES: Do you consider yourself organized?

CC: Yeah, yeah, I consider myself organized.

ES: Do you have an agenda? [Laughs]

CC: I have an agenda, I have a calendar [Laughs)]Yeah.

ES: What do you think are the pros and cons of the path you have chosen?

CC: Oh jeez... I like my job, its rewarding, I like that I can make a difference in someone's life. An education costs a lot of money and I'm going to be in debt until I die. That is definitely a con.

ES: But you love it. [Laughs]

CC: Yeah [laughs], I love coming to work. Education is going cost money unfortunately.

ES: But you wouldn't say you regret anything right?

CC: Nope.

ES: Good, okay now for politics and community involvement. Do you consider yourself active politically?

CC: Like do I vote? I vote.

ES: That's good.

CC: Sure.

ES: Good, vote.

SP: And today's election-day. [Laughs]

ES: Like, do you follow...debates and stuff?

CC: Yes, yes I consider myself pretty active in that.

ES: Have you been involved with any type of community work?

CC: Politically or at all?

ES: Probably at all.

CC: I mean we do, just through this office we do a lot of volunteering for things in the senior community. I always did in college, I always did Habitat for Humanity over spring break, which was fun. I went out to Oakland one year for spring break.

SP: Oh wow.

ES: Is that building houses?

CC: Yes, building houses, we sided a whole house.

ES: And that's rewarding to look at it after and be like that's what I did on my break.

CC: Yeah it was pretty good, and then another year I did New Orleans, it was like a couple years after Hurricane Katrina.

ES: My roommate did that!

CC: That was a really interesting experience.

SP: Did you choose those places? Or did they place you there?

CC: I chose them.

SP: Oh. What made you pick?

CC: When we went out to Oakland, I went with three of my friends and we had like a little vacation in San Fran before then.

SP: I love it there.

CC: Yeah so it was...

ES: Sound fun.

SP: You just got to cross the bridge [laughs]

CC: Yeah. [Laughs]

ES: What role has religion played in your life?

CC: I mean I grew up going to church every Sunday, until I was like sixteen, I wouldn't consider myself really religious, I go to church with my family on holidays.

ES: Right.

CC: To me, it's just more of a traditional thing, but I come from a pretty typical Irish-Catholic family. My grandparents go to church like every day and... [Laughs]

ES: How have health issues impacted your life or those in your family?

CC: Myself and my family have been pretty lucky, no huge health issues, my grandfather died last year he's ninety-nine so pretty good genes, can't really complain about that. My boyfriend's dad has Huntington's disease, so it's...

ES: What's that?

CC: It's a chronic neurodegenerative disease

SP: I'm learning about that in neuroscience right now.

CC: Are you?

SP: Yeah.

ES: I've never heard of it.

CC: It's pretty crappy. But it's interesting to see his family, because when you have it, you have it from when you're twenty-five on.

ES: Oh really?

CC: It's interesting to see his family and how they deal with it, their pretty positive about it. It's pretty amazing.

ES: The attitude really...matters.

CC: The attitude really makes a difference when people are sick.

ES: What are your experiences in assessing quality and affordable health care?

CC: Oh...well, I think health care is really hard. I think we pay a lot for it, and you still have to pay a lot every single time you go to the doctor. I mean I think health insurance is something every single person should have, Everyone has a lot different opinions on it, I definitely support universal health care from a health provider standpoint.

ES: You probably have to deal with that...

CC: All the time. I mean we have patients come in here all the time with Mass Health and patient's with [_____] insurance.

ES: Are hearing aids...?

CC: Hearing aids are covered through Mass Health which is great, but no private insurance companies pay for hearing aids.

ES: Okay.

CC: So people who pay for their own health insurance don't get the benefit of having coverage for hearing aids, and that's frustrating.

ES: That is frustrating because they need to hear.

CC: And they cost a lot of money.

SP: It's funny because my grandfather, well my grandmother literally like called me two days ago and goes, "Guess what, Poppy just got two hearing aids for each ear from the VA. [Veterans Administration]"

CC: Good!

SP: Yeah because they couldn't afford to get them otherwise.

CC: And yeah, the VA should, they have awesome services.

SP: It was such a long process to get them though, he was writing them emails, every time I would go over.

CC: Yeah, because you have to be approved but then the VA, they cover the full cost of everything.

ES: Which is awesome.

CC: Yeah, and they're good technology, good hearing aids.

SP: He loves them, he's like they make a huge difference, and he's like, "Now you guys can't talk about me because now I can hear you!" [Laughs]

CC: Now he can hear you! [Laughs]

ES: Now you need to be nice.

CC: He can start participating, it will be nice.

ES: See when my grandfather is at the dinner table, you can watch him switch them off. I'm like, "I see you turning them off." Like what? You don't want to hear me?

CC: [Laughs] He's not paying attention to you.

ES: He said he's not me, it's my grandma. He said, "It's not you I don't want to hear, we can talk later, it's gram." I'm like, "Oh okay." [Laughs] Okay, so whose health are you responsible for, besides your own? You can say no one. [Laughs] Mine!

CC: No one, Mine!

ES: Okay, so this is just in general, how do you get through tough times, what kinds of thoughts keep you going?

CC: I tend to be an optimistic person, so you know...

ES: And I feel like you working with other people going through tough times, like, that's a really important quality to have.

CC: Yeah, and another nice thing, luckily the patients we see, the issues we're seeing them for are not a life or death type thing, but a lot of these patients are older, and they or their husbands or children have significant health issues and I think perspective is always important. Like if I'm having a crappy day, for whatever reason, remembering that I saw my patient this morning whose little sister had cancer, when he was 4 years old, nothing's that bad then.

ES: That's a good outlook. How do you define success in your life and has the definition changed over time?

CC: Yeah. Yes it has definitely changed over time. I want to wake up every day and go to a job that I'm not miserable to go to.

ES: That's success. [Laughs]

CC: Yes, that's success. Being happy and having friends and family and people around you and money wise, it's nice to have enough money to do the things you want and go on vacation. But, I'd rather have a job I really enjoy, then a job that I hate and make a lot of money at. And I didn't think that when I was 16. I just wanted to make all the money possible and didn't care how much [_____??]

ES: And right and that's how you would say it changed?

CC: Yeah, the idea of happiness in your work is definitely different now.

ES: And I feel like when you're younger you don't think of the big picture of things. You're just like yeah, I wanna have a nice house, and car...[Laughs]

CC: Yeah I want to buy a nice car and I want to buy nice clothes. It's so nice to be able to do that but...

ES: Right, based on your life experience, what advice would you give to women of today and future generations?

CC: Oh god, that's a big one. [Laughs]

ES: (Laughs)

CC: I don't know, I guess do what you want to do. I've always been really lucky, especially having parents who never—they always just said, "Try it, try it!"

ES: Yeah supporting...

CC: Yeah, do it! I mean it sounds so silly, but just, if it's something you want, go for it, then if it doesn't work then try something else

ES: That's empowering (Laughs). Now that we are working to tell a fuller story of the history of women then has been recorded in the past, what should we be sure to include? Well like in class, we talk about women holding strong positions at work and I think just the fact that your, you have a title, and a good job, you are an audiologist, like that's something like to be proud of.

CC: Yeah, it is. And it is also—I guess, but I feel like that moment of success for women is making sure you have a husband and kids and have a good job and can cook well and I don't know, you don't have to do well in those things.

SP: Yeah, that's kind of what we are learning about, we're learning about the fifties housewife and how they stay at home...

ES: Their ideal, to be successful as a wife, you had to stay home, clean, cook, have kids, have them raised, you can do more than that or not have any kids, ever.

CC: I think that's a big thing for women, especially at my age now, everyone's always asking when are you getting married, when are you going to have kids? I'm like, "I don't know."

ES: You don't need it planned.

CC: Yeah, you don't need it planned. You can do whatever you want! You don't need to have a family and kids in order to be a real person [Laughs].

ES: Yeah, and we were also talking about like, like image. How it is so, like...we're expected to look a certain way and dress a certain way, and if you don't look like that then...we were talking about even from the 1950s until today.

CC: Well, they always make the comparison when your reading those things about Marilyn Monroe, about how she was a size ten and now if you're not a size 0 then you're gigantic. I think...

ES: Just be happy!

CC: Yeah just be happy. It's not always easy though, when you see all the girls in their skimpy little Halloween costumes and you go, "Oh man, I don't look like that in mine." But [Laughs]

ES: Is there anyone else you would suggest we talk to?

CC: Hmm...I don't know.

ES: How old were you when you were allowed to date and where did you go on dates? [Laughs]

CC: Oh my gosh. [Laugh]

SP: I like that question. [Laughs]

CC: Since I was the youngest in my family, my sisters always said I had it easier, I think I went on my first actual date when I was a junior in high school? Maybe?

ES: But you're saying that your sisters broke in your parents?

CC: Yeah, yeah. They were a lot easier. I mean I had a boyfriend—my first boyfriend was freshman year in high school, but we didn't go on dates together.

ES: No, it's just like hallway boyfriend

CC: Yeah, but we used to go, my boyfriend from when we could drive in high school, we used to go to Panera all the time.

ES: You pick 2?

CC: Yup. [Laughs] Salad and chicken noodle soup, that's what we always used to have. And I remember we went to a date at the Nutcracker in Boston. And that was nice, that was a big event.

ES: Yeah but the Nutcracker is awesome.

CC: Yeah, I got to get dressed up. So fun.

ES: Did you do dance, or play sports when you were younger?

CC: Yeah. I played soccer forever and I ran track in high school.

ES: Nice. Where you considered fashionable when you were younger?

CC: I think so. [Laughs] I mean like...

ES: I look back in pictures and I'm like why did I wear that? But at the time, me and all my friends were dressed like that, like yeah we're fashionable [Laughs]

CC: [Laughs] Like,, you know I had butterfly clips.

ES: Oh, I had the moving ones, not the hard plastic.

CC: Oh it was great, it was awesome.

SP: Or the snap bracelets.

ES: Oh yeah!

SP: Or the choker necklaces.

CC: So when I was in middle school, Abercrombie clothes were like so major, and I was never allowed to have any, but my sisters were older than me and they would buy them on their own, so I would steal them at any chance I got.

ES: My mom hated if it said the words down the side, she'd say, "No, no."

CC: Or down the sleeve...so cool

ES: She'd always joke to me, "Are you getting paid to advertise for that?" Like maybe!

CC: [Laughs] So trendy!

ES: What was your favorite musical group or song?

CC: Ever?

ES: Yeah, like ever? It says what "was your" so like growing up maybe? Or if you have one now, you can say now.

CC: I love Dave Matthews Band, that's always been a band I loved since middle school.

ES: Did you ever see them in concert?

CC: Yes, I've seen them a lot in concert. Too many times. I saw them this past summer, it was awesome.

ES: Really?

CC: Yeah.

SP: What was like your favorite like childhood, like music group?

CC: Okay, so I was a little bit young for New Kids On The Block, but my sisters were like right in their prime age, so there was a lot of New Kids On The Block when I was little. Like we had the sheets and the dolls and everything else. And then when I was in middle school, it was like N'Sync and Backstreet Boys. I liked them both, I never had a preference.

ES: You didn't have a preference?! Oh. I see like when we were in school, you had to pick like what team you were on.

CC: Yeah, I feel like I may have been on team N'Sync but I liked them both.

SP: Yeah that's how I was too.

ES: Yeah they're both catchy.

CC: I saw Backstreet Boys in concert a couple years ago, with New Kids On the Block, it was awesome.

SP: So did I! At Mohegan Sun I saw them.

CC: Best concert ever, it was great.

ES: How were girls treated while you were in school?

CC: I mean...fine. I don't ever remember any big issues.

ES: I think we are probably talking about either older or yeah...or I was thinking bullying.

SP: Or what we are talking about in class, like women as objects?

ES: I feel like bullying is so big when we were in like middle school.

CC: Well I feel like now there's so much more of a focus on it.

ES: Especially because of social media.

CC: When I was younger it just happened, but it was just one of those things where it was like yeah that person was mean to me in school today. I don't know. I don't ever remember an incident of really being bullied or it being an issue other than people making fun of my hair.

ES: No! I like your hair!

CC: Yeah, but when your—people called me Annie all the time and it drove me crazy.

ES: That would drive me crazy, that would drive me crazy. When you're not home where do you normally spend your time aside from work? [Laughs]

CC: Work, I don't know...

ES: Do you go into Boston at all?

CC: Yeah. I mean we live like technically in the city, we go out to eat a lot, I go see my family a lot, I have four nieces, and another one on the way so that's fun.

ES: Congrats! Are you the cool aunt?

CC: Yes [Laughs]

ES: My aspiring goal.

SP: What are your nieces' names?

CC: They are four girls, obviously, because they are nieces, sorry it's been a long day. Avery is the oldest, then Kendall, and then Julia, and then Abby, and then I don't know what the 5th one will be named yet.

ES: Is it a niece?

CC: Yup! It's another girl.

ES: Is this all from the same sister?

CC: No! Two sisters, they each have 2 girls. And one sister is having a third.

ES: Wow, no boys, girl power!

CC: No boys, yeah. [Laughs]

ES: Do you have any hobbies or regular leisure activities that you do outside of home?

CC: Yeah, I like to read for fun, which I never got to do like when I was in grad school, I don't think I read a book for fun. Maybe like once a summer?

ES: You had more important things to read.

CC: Yeah, but now I read a lot.

ES: Do you have a favorite author?

CC: No. I like to read a lot of memoirs and I'll go through like five at a time. And I tend to get on these paths of certain types of books. Like I've been reading, what did I read? I read "Gone Girl". And I read "Girl on the Train" and then I read "The Good Neighbor." Creepy, kind of like mysteries.

ES: Did you end up seeing the movie for that?

CC: Yeah, it was so good!

ES: I read the book and saw the movie, but I thought the movie made the whole book come to life. Like seeing it in person. It was creepy enough to read about it, but then actually the acting was like so...

CC: Yeah it didn't ruin it, you know how sometimes it can ruin the book and it didn't do it.

ES: That had me going for a while, that was creepy.

CC: And the ending!

SP: I was shocked that he went back with her!

CC: He had to! She was crazy! I watched it, so I remember when I was reading that book and I was like, Oh my god, he killed her, this is so scary, what if he..." You think that your husband is normal and then he goes and murders you! And then when it flipped I was like, "Oh my god, I'm not that crazy! I would never do that." And then I watched the movie with my boyfriend and he had like the exact opposite reaction as me. He was like, "Oh my god that girl's nuts! Are you like this?!" Watch out! [Laughs],

ES: No but the acting was spot on and they didn't let you know that it was the flip too early in the movie.

CC: Not at all. They kept it going, I remember reading that in the book and being like holy sh**!

ES: Okay, what transitions did you go through moving from childhood to adulthood? Besides those painfully awkward stages that we all go through.

CC: It always a little bit awkward being thirteen years old. You know it is definitely an adjustment when you move away and go to college.

ES: Where you homesick?

CC: No, I wasn't. I was lucky I had one of my best friends, we went to college together, we didn't live together but like saw her a lot.

ES: And that's a familiar face that reminds you of home.

CC: Yeah, and I made friends right away at school and I'm still friends with all of them now. I loved it.

ES: Do you do reunions or like meet up anywhere?

CC: Oh, all the time, and a lot of us live in Boston so it's like eight girls and we all went to UMASS and all met first week of freshman year.

SP: Oh wow!

ES: Oh from freshman year, so they're not even from your program? Or some of them?

CC: No.

ES: That's crazy.

CC: Yeah, it was like people were roommates with each other; we lived on the same floor.

SP: Were you friends with your roommate freshman year?

CC: No. We didn't not get along but I'm not like friendly with her now.

SP: Oh okay.

ES: It's always hard freshman year, but that's hard too because you move away from home and have this idea of like how freshman year is going to be and then if you're not stuck with someone then it's not enjoyable with.

CC: Yeah, I mean you've heard horror stories of people who had like horrific roommates, I definitely didn't have that. But I didn't have like...

SP: Someone that you were close with.

CC: Yup.

ES: And then you switched sophomore year?

CC: Yup, sophomore year I lived with one of my best friends who I met freshman year. And she's still...

SP: I was thinking we could talk about your work more because since this is kind of what we want to do. What do you think was the most rewarding experience that you had? Or the patient that was most...?

CC: I mean there's a few of them, it's those people—I mean probably the most amazing experience I can think of was when I was at Children's [Hospital] and I was in when a CI [cochlear implant] got activated. It was a little kid. I think he was twenty-six months, and his CI

got activated and his mom started talking and everyone in the room was crying and it was pretty amazing.

SP: Yeah and their face just like...

ES: Yeah, we watched a couple YouTube videos of it.

CC: It's just one of those things where like...

ES: But I get goosebumps just from the videos, but to actually be there...

CC: Yeah and I remember crying because you can't help it. You're seeing a person's life change, so that was pretty awesome. I mean just having—I mean it can get—you know I'm here every day and we see a lot of patients and sometimes you can kind of forget how important it can be to some people. So patients who come in—I had a woman today I hadn't seen her in a few months and she was like, "I don't know what I would do without these, they made my life so much better. I love being able to hear. I love being able to talk to people." It's pretty awesome.

ES: Yeah, it's a big deal. [Laughs]

CC: Good, I'm happy you say that.

SP: What do you think one of the hardest things is about being an audiologist?

CC: Nothing is perfect, so like, we're not curing anyone's hearing loss or anyone's issue, I mean it's a treatment, but it's not a cure, and that's hard sometimes, some patients come in and they understand that, and some people have unrealistic expectations, and it's difficult to feel like you can't do what they want you to do. And there's some people who just have a harder time adjusting or their hearing loss is more severe and they have a lot more processing issues that you can't help. And that's hard.

ES: Have you ever had a family, that like not the person who needs the hearing aid, like the person who needs them doesn't want them, but the family members want them?

CC: Yeah, yeah.

ES: How do you deal with that?

SP: I feel like that's a lot with the elderly too. They think they don't need it.

CC: We ask our patients to bring a third party. So like her husband, wife, adult child, because a lot of patients that you see are in denial and they don't want to do anything about it and it's the people around them who are forcing them to come in.

ES: Right.

CC: So you try to, I mean you try to make them see what they're actually missing.

ES: Do you like test them and then say like okay look at your results?

CC: We do demos of hearing aids in the office for anyone that wants to and for them to actually put hearing aids on and be like, "Oh that's what I'm missing!" [Laughs]

ES: I feel like the stubbornness of it would get frustrating!

CC: Or when people, and you do a hearing test, and this person has a severe hearing loss, they're like, "No I'm good, I can hear everything." No you can't, but you can't change someone's mindset.

ES: So when you do hearing tests for hearing aids, is it like the same test we got in high school? Where you...

CC: I mean the basics of it, yeah.

ES: Yeah is it that same type of thing?

CC: Yeah, but we do a lot more, listen for the beeps, then we do sounds people can hear...

SP: Then do you like raise your hand?

CC: Yeah, but we do a lot more speech testing, to kind of see how people can actually process speech and repeat back words, and speech-in-noise testing. So you have to repeat back sentences in background noise, so it's always where people have trouble.

ES: Right.

CC: So that is usually the tool to show patients that you may be able to have a conversation with me one on one, but as soon as there's background noise, you can't hear anything.

ES: And then all of that is recorded, so they can listen back to like what they actually said?

CC: Mhm.

ES: That's eye-opening. If they're completely off. [Laughs]

CC: Yeah, and if someone's wife comes with them, I'll use her, so we'll have her read a list of words, without the hearing aids in and then put hearing aids in and read it and he's like, "Oh I can hear, I can understand every word she's saying!" So that's a good way to show people too.

SP: Has there ever been like an experience where you were struggling to like find the right treatment for someone? And like you couldn't figure out how to help them?

CC: Yeah. I have a patient right now I've been seeing since we've opened our doors. She's been wearing a hearing aid for fifty-three years, since she was three years old. She's 56, and needs new hearing aids because hers are really old, but she hates everything that we try. And it's just a different—it's hard for her.

ES: The technology has changed since then too.

CC: Exactly. That's tough because this is someone who has an emotional attachment to her hearing aids and she relies—if she's not wearing her hearing aids she's deaf, she can't communicate with anyone. So it obviously means a lot to her. And it's hard to not be able to give her a solution.

SP: Yeah.

ES: So she still...she hasn't gotten new ones yet?

CC: We're trying. We're trying someone else in two weeks.

ES: How many options are there?

CC: There's a lot, there's a lot of options, and I...

ES: Just as in different types of hearing aids?

CC: Different types of hearing aids, different companies, different manufacturers, different algorithms and different ways hearing aids sound and...

ES: So she just doesn't like the way she is hearing with them?

CC: Yeah, because she has like old analog hearing aids. Hearing aids now are all digital, so the sound quality is completely different. For most people, digital is better but for someone like her, it's not. She hates it.

ES: So it's not actually that you can't find something that she can hear with, it's just like her preference.

CC: We can't find something she is comfortable with. Like, she'll take them and try them and go to work, and she's like I can't communicate with anyone using these. I know a lot of that is an emotional...

ES: It's a security blanket type of thing.

CC: And you've got to be able to deal with that.

ES: They don't make those hearing aids anymore so...

CC: She's got to figure something out.

SP: Okay my last question would be: where do you see yourself in ten years?

CC: Professionally?

SP: Yeah that and just like personal.

CC: I mean professionally, I have no plans on changing what I do. I really like being in private practice and working with patients with hearing aids. That is not something I would want to give up. Like I was saying, I used to do a lot with diagnostic testing, I don't miss that. I would miss doing hearing aids. I don't know, personally, hopefully I'll be married, maybe have some kids. I'm in no rush to do that.

ES: Do you want kids?

CC: Eh, not yet. [Laughs]

ES: Maybe a dog first [Laughs]

CC: Yes, yes. I'm a dog person. Actually I would love to get a dog right now.

ES: Really?

CC: Yeah!

ES: What kind?

CC: I don't know, a big one.

ES: Oh like a rescue?

CC: Yeah, my parent's have a pit-bull lab mix, and she's the nicest dog in the entire world. I love her.

ES: But rescues are hit and miss I feel like.

CC: They are.

ES: There's a lot of background, like, like they really make sure they check your home, like my neighbors just got a rescue and all the kid had to go separately for an interview.

CC: Yeah, they are. But that's actually a nice thing.

ES: No it is!

CC: But yeah, we got Nelly when I was still living at home, I was in grad school and she's just like the best dog ever. So they hit the jackpot with that rescue so I would just hope that I would get...

ES: I think you would be able to tell though if you went though, and spend time with them if it feels right...

CC: My boyfriend really wants a golden doodle.

ES: Okay, my dog is cousins to the golden doodle, haven't you ever seen one? You don't like them?

CC: I think they're really ugly; I do not think they are cute dogs. Their curly little hairs. I think they're weird. They're like tall and lanky and they have curls. It's weird. He's like obsessed with it.

ES: I heard they're really friendly though

SP: I see more the poodle side of it, of the dog.

ES: I guess it depends on what exact breeder it comes from because some do look more like golden...

CC: I know they are really nice dogs, but it's just something about the way...

ES: Yeah, would you want a smaller dog? They're big. Golden doodles are big.

CC: Eh, I don't mind. I don't want anything bigger than that. All dogs Chris likes, I hate. He's like I want a husky, I'm like nope.

ES: Huskies are known to be mean.

CC: “I want a German Shepard” I’m like, “Nope.” I got bit by a German Shepard when I was little delivering the newspaper.

ES: Did you have to get shots?

CC: Yup.

ES: Did they have to draw blood?

CC: Oh yeah, yeah it was bad.

SP: Where did it bit you?

CC: Right on the leg. Right there.

SP: Wow.

CC: So no I’m never getting a German Shepard. Never.

ES: No never!

SP: I bet you stopped delivering to that house [Laughs]

CC: Yeah, I did. Scary house. I just left it at the bottom of their stairs; I was never going back up.

ES: Well maybe you can’t think of a breed, you just need to go in and see what they have.

CC: I just have to find the right puppy.

ES: I have faith in you.

CC: Any other questions?

SP: Nope I think that’s it.

ES: I think we are all good, thank you for meeting with us.

SP: Yeah thank you for taking the time, to meet with us.

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